

**Role of Traditional Birth Attendants in Maternal Health:  
Trends of Antenatal Consultations in Traditional Authority  
Nkanda, Mulanje District (Southern Malawi)**

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**ABSTRACT** Malawi's maternal mortality rate is high at 620 for every 100,000 live births. The involvement of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) in child delivery is regarded as one contributing factor. The country has seen policy shifts pertaining to involvement of TBAs. However, no comprehensive studies have been done to make evidence-based policies. This study aimed at examining the extent to which pregnant women consulted TBAs in different policy environments. Records kept by a trained TBA from 1998 to 2001 were analyzed. One-on one interviews with the TBA, pregnant women and their guardians were conducted. Two hundred and seventy-seven pregnant women made antenatal visits to the TBA during the 4-year period. On average, the TBA attended to 519 pregnant women annually. Interviews revealed that women consult TBAs because of their kindness and respect compared to the abusive treatment experienced in hospitals. Issues raised in this paper need to be considered when formulating maternal health-related policies.