

Circumstances leading to home childbirth among women living in Winterveldt, Tshwane, Gauteng

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Background and objectives

Childbirth is a natural process and a joyful social event for the family and community. Most women undergo normal childbirth with healthy babies, however, complications cannot be predicted. Scientific evidence has shown that there is an increased risk of maternal and perinatal mortality among women who give birth outside health care facilities as compared to those who give birth in healthcare facilities. Contrary to developed countries that offer choice on birthplace setting and encourage home deliveries, Sub-Saharan Africa has always aligned themselves with the WHO recommendations for in-facility deliveries for all women irrespective of their risk category. This study therefore aimed to explore the circumstances and experiences related to home childbirth among women living in Winterveldt.

Methods

Explorative qualitative study was conducted in Winterveldt to explore circumstances leading to home childbirth and to also describe the experiences of home childbirth among women aged 18 years and above, who had had a home childbirth. Twenty one individual in-depth interviews were used to collect data from the purposively selected participants. The data was analyzed using thematic content analysis.

Findings

Many women gave birth at home due to religious and cultural beliefs. However, some women wished to give birth in a health care facility but due to unintentional factors such as lack of transport, failure to identify labour pains and fast labour. Some women indicated harsh treatment in healthcare facilities compared to the pleasant birthing experience at home as a reason for opting for home childbirth.

Conclusion

The study found that despite availability of health care facilities, women still utilize services of TBAs. The findings indicated both intentional and unintentional circumstances to the phenomenon. It is therefore recommended that patients satisfaction and outreach programmes aimed at encouraging utilization of public healthcare maternity facilities be implanted.

Keywords: home child birth, traditional birth attendants