

ABSTRACT

Background: Pregnancy can be described as a sensitive and delicate period for women, accompanied by diverse physiological and psychological changes which can bring stress, depression and anxiety on the expectant mothers. Social support during pregnancy is widely recognized for reducing feelings of anxiety and stress associated with pregnancy and can act as a buffer by providing other coping resources for women. Living conditions in urban slums are acknowledged as harsh and unhygienic, yet dwellers, including pregnant women, reside in these areas. This study, thus, sought to explore the social support received by women in the Brigade slum, an urban slum in Accra, and the relationship it has with their pregnancy experiences.

Methods: This study was a qualitative phenomenological study. Sixteen respondents were purposively sampled in the Brigade slum community in the Ayawaso West Municipality of Accra. Data collection was done through in-depth interviews with the aid of an interview guide. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and manually analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: The study revealed that all women received some form of social support during their pregnancy though not in equal measures. Assistance with household activities like sweeping, washing and water fetching were the commonest type of support received. Monetary support was however the greatest unmet need of support. Husbands, siblings and mothers of respondents were the main providers of social support. Respondents faced numerous challenges in the slum such as spontaneous evacuations and violence, great sources of worry during their pregnancy.

Conclusion: The women registered a need for social support during pregnancy. Support received served as immense protective and buffering resource during pregnancy in the slum.