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Original Research Paper

Home Science

A STUDY OF FOOD AVOIDANCES OR RESTRICTIONS DURING PREGNANCY: A SURVEY BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT An appropriate eating pattern is essential throughout pregnancy to ensure a healthy pregnancy and baby (Pickel et al., 2005).Food or drinks which should be avoided or restricted during pregnancy are tea, coffee, cold drink, chocolates, alcohol, raw or undercooked milk, papaya, left over food, raw egg or flesh foods. In the present study, the avoidance of these food or drinks was studied according to habitat and socio economic status of respondents among 246 respondents at sir sunderlal hospital, varanasi using interview schedule. It was found that these restrictions were followed mainly to prevent miscarriage, promote easy delivery, and prevent fetal malformations.

KEYWORDS : Avoidances, Restricted, habitat, socio economic status

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is the most unexceptional moment in a woman's life. Her diet plays a crucial role for the baby's well-being. Pregnancy imposes the need for considerable extra calorie and nutrients for a mother. An adequate balanced diet is, therefore, of utmost importance during pregnancy to prevent "nutritional stress." (Patil R, Mittal A, 2010). Varioud studies have shown that if such behaviors are not adopted, there is an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes including low birth weight (Martin C.L. and et al., 2015), preeclampsia (Flick A.A. and et al., 2010) pre-term birth (Han Z. and et al., 2011) and neurodevelopmental problems such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (Brown C.W. and et al.,2010).

METHODOLOGY

Two hundred and forty six pregnant women was selected randomly. The survey was conducted at sir sunderlal hospital, Varanasi. Food avoidances or restrictions among pregnant women was surveyed with the help of self-structured interview schedule. Socio-economic status (SES) was categorized on the basis of per capita monthly income of the household. B. G Prasad (updated) socio-economic scale was used. Habitat was categorized into rural and urban. The results were discussed with suitable statistical tools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tea, coffee, cold drink, chocolates contain caffeine and thus should be avoided because the intake has been associated with increased risk of miscarriage, low birth weight infants and small for gestational age. In a study carried out by Verena Sengpielet.et.al., (2013), it was reported that caffeine intake was consistently associated with decreased birth weight and increased odds of small for gestational age. Caffeine especially should be avoided during Ist trimester as it may cause miscarriage.

Tea, coffee, cold drink, chocolates:

In the present study it was observed that, among rural inhabitants, 29.5% avoided tea, 71.4 % (max.) avoided coffee, 58.1% avoided cold drink and only 14.3% respondents avoided chocolates. Approximately similar findings were found in a study provided by Edyta Suliga (2015) who reported 57.4% avoidance of coffee and 36.8% avoidance of strong tea in rural inhabitants. In urbanities, 27.0% respondents avoided tea, 39.0% respondents avoided coffee, 38.3% respondents avoided chocolates, and 36.9% respondents avoided cold drink. In urban area, except tea, avoidance of coffee, cold drink and chocolates was observed to be approximately equal. There was found significant association ($P<0.01$) for coffee, cold drink and chocolates avoidance.

When reported according to socioeconomic status, tea (55.2%), coffee (55.2%), cold drink (72.4%), chocolates (62.1%) were majorly avoided in respondents of high socioeconomic status. Highly significant association ($P<0.01$) was found between the respondents of all socio-economic status for tea, coffee, cold drink and chocolates.

Alcohol consumption:

Alcohol passes freely across the placenta and thus causes fetal alcohol syndrome which is characterized by low birth weight and length, low head circumference and congenital and intellectual anomalies. The minimum or threshold level at which alcohol begins to pose a significant threat to pregnancy is unknown. It is therefore preferable that women avoid the intake of alcohol during pregnancy (Hoesli, I., 2009).

In the present study, alcohol was observed to be totally avoided in urban as well as rural areas and also in all the socio-economic status. 100.0% respondents avoided the alcohol during pregnancy. Therefore it was statistically constant.

Papaya:

It was again observed to be totally avoided in urban as well as rural areas and also in all the socio-economic status. Thus, it was found statistically constant. Approximately similar findings were found in a study conducted in Tamilnadu by Ali, N.S., et.al, who reported that 82.0% women avoided papaya during pregnancy. The reason provided by them that it may lead to abortion. In another study carried out by Parmar, Ankita., et al, 2013, it was reported that most common food avoided were papaya (53.5%) Reasons for not consuming such food were abortion, placental disruption and multiple others.

In a study done by Puri, S., and Kapoor, S., it was reported that 16.5 % women believed that papaya can cause abortion similar to our study finding.

Raw or undercooked animal products:

These have a potential to foster harmful bacteria. The most common type of bacterial infection includes salmonella in raw or undercooked eggs or flesh food and listeria in raw or undercooked milk (Draga, Plecas., et.al, 2014). They have the ability to cross the placenta and harm the baby which may be life threatening (Einarson A. 2010).

In the present study, it was observed that raw or undercooked milk and raw or undercooked flesh food (100.0%) were totally avoided by the respondents according to both independent variables i.e. habitat as well as socio-economic status.

On the other hand, 45.8% respondents of rural area avoided

the intake of raw or undercooked egg and 40.7% respondents of urban area were observed to avoiding the same. However, the result obtained is insignificant (P>0.05).According to socio-economic status, 67.1% (max.) respondents of low socio-economic status avoided the raw or undercooked egg intake. The high percentage of avoidance in low socio-economic status and rural habitat was obtained mainly due to their economic problem. 58.3% respondents of high socio-economic status were avoiding the raw or undercooked egg because they were more aware about the complication of pregnancy. Very fewer percentages (18.5%) of respondents of middle socio-economic status were reported to be avoiding the same. The association was found to be highly significant between the variables (P<0.01).

Leftover food:

It was mainly avoided by the urban habitants (59.6%) while only 26.7% rural respondents were not consuming the leftover food. According to socio-economic status, maximum avoidance was found in high socio-economic status (75.9%) followed by respondents of middle socio-economic status (64.1%) and least in low socio-economic status (9.0%).

The reason behind the avoidance of leftover food is that it may be contaminated if not properly freezed or left for more than 2 or 3 days.

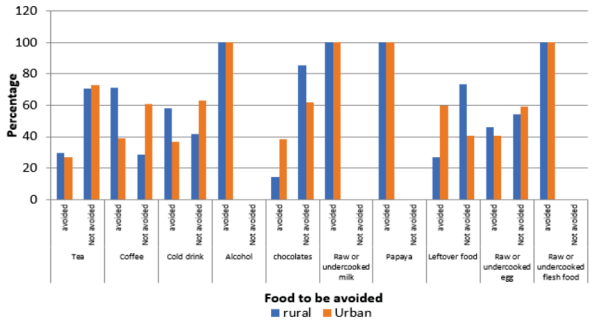

Fig: 24A. Percent distribution of respondents of different habitat according to food avoidances or restrictions

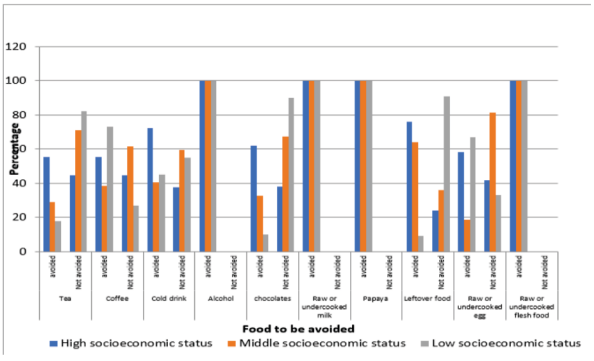

Fig: 24B. Percent distribution of respondents of different socio-economic status according to food avoidances or restrictions

CONCLUSION

This study has described what changes women make to their diets during pregnancy and the food avoidances or restriction among rural and urban habitat and different socio-economic status women was found to be based on their income level, knowledge and awareness level.

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