

Equality of prenatal care among immigrant versus Taiwanese women

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Adequacy of prenatal care is linked with preterm birth, low birth weight, and infant death and reflects quality of medical care. Birth from immigrant mothers consists of 14% national total birth in Taiwan. The disparity of prenatal care among immigrants and races were reported, relatively lower in immigrants comparing to that of native mothers. To indentify and guarantee the prenatal care of immigrants is essential for promotion of health among the immigrants. Public health interventions designed to improve prenatal care utilization among women might reduce unfavorable birth outcomes. It is important to realize the adequacy of prenatal care among immigrant for the help of immigrant people. The objective of this research is to compare the adequacy of prenatal care between immigrant and native Taiwanese mothers.

METHODS:

A retrospective, observational hospital-based study was conducted, based on systematic chart review of all singleton live births at a hospital in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Data were extracted on maternal demographic and behavioral characteristics, and gestational age. The interested outcome variable was the numbers of prenatal visits that were stratified into inadequate, intermediate, adequate, and adequate plus four categories by Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization Index.

RESULTS:

Of 2543 births, 20.2 % were to immigrant mothers. The frequency and distribution of prenatal care among Taiwanese were inadequate 533(26.3%), intermediate 879(43.3%), adequate 568(28.0%), and adequate plus 49(2.4%). The frequency and distribution of the immigrants were 152(29.6%), intermediate 218(42.4%), adequate 137(26.7%), and adequate plus 7(1.4%).

Table 1. The perterm births among Taiwanese and immigrants

	Preterm		Total	Pearson Chi-Square Tests,
	Non preterm	Preterm		
Taiwanese	1,872 92.3%	157 7.7%	2,029 100.0%	0.001
Immigrant	496 96.5%	18 3.5%	514 100.0%	
Total	2,368	175	2,543	

Table 2 The distribution of adequacy of prenatal care among immigrant and Taiwanese mothers stratified by prematurity

		Adequacy of Prenatal care				Pearson Chi-Square Tests, Sig.
		Inadequate	Intermediate	Adequate	Adequate plus	
Non preterm	Taiwanese	493 26.3%	841 44.9%	511 27.3%	27 1.4%	0.57
	Immigrant	146 29.4%	213 42.9%	131 26.4%	6 1.2%	
Preterm	Taiwanese	40 25.5%	38 24.2%	57 36.3%	22 14.0%	0.71
	Immigrant	6 33.3%	5 27.8%	6 33.3%	1 5.6%	
Total	Taiwanese	533 26.3%	879 43.3%	568 28.0%	49 2.4%	0.25
	Immigrant	152 29.6%	218 42.4%	137 26.7%	7 1.4%	

Chi-square test for the distributions of adequacy between immigrants and Taiwanese revealed no significant differences. For both of the preterm birth and preterm births, the adequacy of prenatal care showed no significant difference of distribution between immigrants and Taiwanese.

CONCLUSION:

Taiwan implements universal national health insurance that provides nearly free prenatal care for both of immigrants and native Taiwanese. The immigrants in Taiwan could be benefit from this health care system and had similar accessibility and adequacy of prenatal care and favorable birth outcomes as native Taiwanese.