

Factors Affecting Prenatal Care in Rural, Low-Income Neighborhoods

Through prenatal care visits, doctors can identify health problems earlier in the pregnancy since they see mothers regularly and can help reduce the risk of pregnancy-related complications such as preterm birth, preeclampsia, and anemia. Women who seek prenatal care are less likely to delivery early and are less likely to have complications before and during childbirth than women who don't seek any prenatal care.

Complex health behaviors, such as prenatal care initiation, result from a myriad of factors, including socio demographics (education, income, social support), maternal behaviors (smoking and alcohol consumption), and cognitions (knowledge, attitudes, beliefs). Our understanding of low-income, rural women's knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about prenatal care is very limited; therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, particularly in women residing in the North Country.

This study will sample at least 400 women from the North Country, including the counties, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence, who are in their child-bearing years (18-35) and will aim at determining any disparities in low-income, rural areas in relation to knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about prenatal care through the completion of a 53-question survey. The findings from this study will support initiatives to raise awareness of the benefits of prenatal care in rural, low-income neighborhoods to ultimately lower low birth weight rates and increase early prenatal care initiation for healthier pregnancies in the North Country.