ABSTRACT

A hospital based cross sectional study was conducted to determine the factors affecting regular utilization of ANC services among postnatal mothers in Chiangrai Regional Hospital, Thailand. One hundred fifty one postnatal mothers, who delivered their babies between 1 and 19 March 1998, were purposively selected. Data collection took place within 5 days of delivery by using a structured questionnaire and antenatal care form.

Criteria for comparison of two groups, namely those postnatal mothers who utilized regular ANC services 4 times or more and those who utilized ANC service less than 4 times according to schedule, were made. This study reveals that 61.6% had regular and 38.4% irregular utilization of ANC services.

The independent variables consisted of 4 parts, namely socio-demographic and psychosocial factors, accessibility and source of information. The results indicate that the age group of 20-24 years was the largest with 31.1%. Almost half of the postnatal mothers (46.4%) reported completed primary school as level of education, whereas 39.7% recorded housewife as occupation. Regarding family income, the group of 3,000 baht or less recorded 39.1%. A majority of the postnatal mothers had high knowledge (62.3%) and a positive attitude (62.3%) towards the utilization of ANC services. Most postnatal mothers (64.9%) resided at 1-5 kilometer distance from the hospital/health center. Almost all postnatal mothers (93.4%) reported convenient transportation and inexpensive travelling. As source of information about ANC service, a majority of postnatal mothers reported health personnel, family members, friends and media.

In this study, significant relationships were revealed between knowledge of ANC service, attitude towards ANC service, source of information from health personnel, volunteers and family members as well as birth weight of new born babies with the regular utilization of ANC services.

No significant relationships were found for socio-demographic factors, social support from husband and source of information from friends and media with regular utilization of ANC services.