

Abstract

Introduction

Hepatitis B Viral Infection (HBV) remains one of the leading cause of morbidity and mortality globally accounting for 38-53% of chronic liver diseases and about 686,000 deaths annually. The prevalence of HBV is 9-20% in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in Kenya it is 5-30% among the general population and 9.4% among pregnant women. This study was aimed at identifying the prevalence, awareness and risk factors associated with HBV infections among pregnant women attending Antenatal clinic (ANC) at Mbagathi District hospital, Nairobi.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional study involving 287 pregnant women enrolled for three months (September to December 2014) from Nairobi and neighbouring counties. A structured questionnaire that captured social, demographic and explanatory variables was administered to the study participants. Blood samples were also drawn from the participants and tested for HBV using Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) system.

Results

The study established that the prevalence of HBV infections among pregnant women attending antenatal clinic at Mbagathi District Hospital was 3.8% with highest infection rate among the 20-24 years age group. Seventy six (60.8 %) of the participants reported sexual encounters in less than a month before the interview of which 5 (7.6%) reported encounters involving other partners apart from their spouses. HBV awareness among the study participants was 12.2%. Before the interview, those with at least tertiary education (Mean =1.33, SD = 1.131), were more informed about HBV infection as compared to those with primary and secondary education (Mean = 0.63, SD = 0.722; (Mean =0.31, SD= 0.664). In regards to assessment of the risk factors; type of family ($\chi^2 =19.753$ df2 p<0.01), parity ($\chi^2 =7.128$ df2 p<0.01), History of abortions ($\chi^2=9.094$ df1 p<0.01), early age (11-15 years) at first sexual encounter ($\chi^2 =8.185$ df1 p<0.01) were significantly associated with HBV positivity.

Conclusion

The prevalence of HBV infection among pregnant women attending Antenatal clinic (ANC) at Mbagathi District hospital, Nairobi was lower (3.8%) than the prevalence among pregnant women nationally (9.4%). These women also showed a low level of HBV awareness (12.2%).