



Dietary Practice and Nutritional Status of Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women seen in consultation at the Garkawa Integrated Health Center in Tahoua Health District.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Pregnant and lactating women are particularly vulnerable to health issues due to their specific nutritional needs. A UNICEF report highlights a significant increase in acute malnutrition among these women in crisis-affected countries, with the number rising from 5.5 to 6.9 million between 2020 and 2022 in 12 nations.

Objectives: This study, conducted at the Garkawa Integrated Health Center in Niger, aimed to evaluate the nutritional statuses of pregnant and lactating women.

Materials and Method: Data collection involved interviews with 100 pregnant and lactating women attending consultations during the study period. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software, and results were presented using tables.

Results: Findings revealed that a majority of pregnant and lactating women reported consuming all foods during pregnancy and breastfeeding (68% and 78% respectively). However, a significant portion mentioned avoiding certain foods during these periods (32% and 22% respectively). Meal frequency was generally high among both groups, with most women eating five times a day during pregnancy and three times a day while breastfeeding (60% and 72% respectively). Differences in dietary habits and food consumption between pregnant and lactating women were observed, with women consuming more animal and plant proteins.

Conclusion: Overall, the study sheds light on the dietary practices and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women in the Garkawa Integrated Health Center, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address nutritional deficiencies in this vulnerable population.

Keywords: Pregnant women , Lactating women, Nutritional status ,Dietary practices, Tahoua

Introduction

Pregnant and lactating women constitute particularly vulnerable groups in terms of health, with specific nutritional needs that can have a significant impact on their well-being and that of their unborn or infant child. However, according to a UNICEF report between 2020 and 2022, the number of pregnant or lactating women suffering from acute malnutrition increased from 5.5 to 6.9 million in 12 countries experiencing food crises. "Due to the global food crisis, millions of mothers and children are facing hunger and severe malnutrition." These 12 countries (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Chad, and Yemen) constitute "the epicenter of this nutritional crisis." This crisis is exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and by drought, conflicts, and instability currently experienced in some countries. In Niger, these deficiencies affect a significant number of women of childbearing age, including pregnant and lactating women. Demographic and health surveys demonstrate that iron deficiency, vitamin A deficiency, and energy deficiencies (based on anthropometric measurements) are highly prevalent among these women. This study focuses on evaluating the nutritional statuses of pregnant and lactating women attending the Garkawa Integrated Health Center, located in the Tahoua district.

Materials and Methods

This research constitutes a descriptive cross-sectional analysis aimed at assessing the dietary practice and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women seeking medical consultations at the Garkawa Integrated Health Center, located in the Tahoua commune health district. Interview guide was used to collect data. The study population includes pregnant and lactating women attending consultations at the Garkawa Integrated Health Center during the

specified study period. Inclusion criteria encompass all pregnant women seeking antenatal care consultations who provide consent to participate in our interview during the study period, as well as all lactating women attending consultations with infants who agree to partake in our interview. Pregnant women experiencing ill health and lactating women are excluded from the study. The collected data was processed using SPSS software. Microsoft Excel and Word were employed for data presentation in the form of tables and graphs. Bivariate analysis of the data was conducted, and the results are presented in frequency tables.

Results and Discussion

Our study results revealed that 68% of pregnant women and 78% of lactating women stated that there are no foods they do not consume during pregnancy and breastfeeding, respectively. However, 32% of pregnant women and 22% of lactating women mentioned that there are foods they do not consume due to pregnancy and breastfeeding, respectively. This finding is similar with Bouhari Amadou Djibril, who, in a study on "dietary practices among pregnant and lactating women in the Kantché department," found that 80% of pregnant women stated that there are no foods they do not consume due to pregnancy [1]. However, our result is lower than those of Zalika, who, in a study on "nutrition and nutritional status of pregnant women attending consultations at the Boukoki CSI in Niamey," found that 85% of pregnant women mentioned that there are foods they do not consume due to pregnancy [24]. After comparison, it appears that pregnant women who stated that there are no foods that they do not consume during pregnancy are more numerous in the Garkawa Integrated Health Center. Lahantarimanana Laingo, in a study on "nutritional status of lactating women in the rural commune of Larinarivo (Madagascar)," found that 46.3% of lactating women stated that there are no foods they do not consume during breastfeeding. As for lactating women, those who mentioned that there are no foods they do not consume during breastfeeding are more numerous in the Garkawa Integrated Health Center than in the rural commune of Larinarivo (Madagascar) [26]. Our results indicate that many pregnant and lactating women eat five times and three times a day, respectively, with 60% of pregnant women and 72% of lactating women falling into these categories. Generally, a woman should eat three times a day, including fats, fruits and vegetables, and lean proteins to meet her energy needs. Thus, our study revealed that all pregnant and lactating women have breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the day. This situation arises because pregnant and lactating women, due to their condition, have higher nutritional needs. The results we obtained showed that women consume stimulants. Half of the interviewed women consume cola. However, this result is higher than of Malam Chaibou Hadjaratou results, who, in a study on "the effect of diet and nutritional status of women during pregnancy on the nutritional status of newborns in the Aguié department," found that only 19% of pregnant women out of 59 consume cola as a stimulant [25]. It appears that pregnant women who consume a stimulant like cola are more numerous in the Garkawa Integrated Health Center in the Tahoua Commune health district than in the Aguié department. This situation arises because cola has become part of the diet of women in the Garkawa Integrated Health Center in the Tahoua Commune health district, who use this stimulant to prevent nausea during pregnancy. Regarding meal frequency, we found that 74% of pregnant women and 70% of lactating women have a higher meal frequency. Our result differs from Zalika, in a study on "nutrition and nutritional status of pregnant women attending consultations at the Boukoki CSI in Niamey," where she found that 36.67% of pregnant women have a higher meal frequency. This difference is due to pregnancy and breastfeeding, as many women reduce their food intake when they are in these states [24]. The consumption of other types of foods varies depending on whether women are pregnant or lactating. Pregnant women consume more animal and plant proteins that are not consumed by lactating women. Specifically, 22.22% consume eggs, 5.56% consume beans, and 22.22% consume meat. There are also 5.56% who consume porridge. This result differs from Malam Chaibou Hadjaratou, who found that the majority of pregnant women never consumed these types of foods. According to a UNICEF study conducted in 2005, pregnant women from the Ali Dan Sofo and Bagalam neighborhoods of Maradi city consume meat three times a week [25]. Regarding nutritional status, 48% of lactating women are normal and have a BMI between 18 and 24. As for the BMI for lactating women, our result is higher than that of DEMOUCHE et al., who conducted a study on the nutritional status of lactating women in the city of SIDI el Abbas in western Algeria, where they found that 42.85% of lactating women have a BMI between 22 and 24.9 [29].

Conclusion:

This study underscores the importance of assessing the dietary practices and nutritional statuses of pregnant and lactating women, especially in regions facing food crises. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address nutritional deficiencies and promote healthy dietary habits among these vulnerable groups. Strategies aimed at improving access to nutritious foods and raising awareness about balanced diets during pregnancy and breastfeeding are crucial for safeguarding the health and well-being of mothers and their children. Further research is warranted to explore the underlying factors influencing dietary behaviors and nutritional outcomes among pregnant and lactating women in s

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Table 1. Distribution of pregnant and lactating women according to the types of food consumed

| Type of food | % of Pregnant woman | % of Breastfeeding woman |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Peanut | 4 | 5 |
| Egg | 22 | 0 |
| Bean | 6 | 0 |
| Patato | 6 | 5 |
| Fish | 17 | 5 |
| Meat | 22 | 0 |
| Porridge | 6 | 0 |

| | | |
|----------------|----|----|
| Broth and salt | 17 | 15 |
| Locust | 0 | 5 |
| Mango | 0 | 45 |
| Fresh pepper | 0 | 15 |
| Yam | 0 | 5 |

Table 2. Distribution of pregnant and lactating women depending on the type of stimulant consumed.

| Stimulants | % of Pregnant woman | % of Breastfeeding woman |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Cola | 50 | 50 |
| Tea | 33 | 42 |
| Coffee | 17 | 8 |

Table 3. Distribution of pregnant and lactating women depending on Number of meal by day.

| Number of meal by day | % of Pregnant woman | % of Breastfeeding woman |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 | 22 | 72 |
| 4 | 8 | 8 |
| 5 | 60 | 18 |
| 6 | 10 | 2 |

Table 4. BMI of pregnant and lactating women

| BMI | % of Pregnant woman | % of Breastfeeding woman |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Thinness | 4 | 4 |
| Normal | 41 | 48 |
| overweight | 31 | 26 |
| Obese | 34 | 22 |

Table 5. Distribution of pregnant and lactating women according to variation in meal intake per day

| Variation in diet | % of Pregnant woman | % of Breastfeeding woman |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Same | 22 | 10 |
| Lower | 18 | 16 |
| Superior | 60 | 74 |

Table 6. Distribution of pregnant and lactating women according to Uneaten food

| Uneaten food | % of Pregnant woman | % of Breastfeeding woman |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | 32 | 68 |
| No | 22 | 78 |