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## Factors Influencing Maternal Health Care Services Utilization in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Maternal mortality trends in developing world has failed to reduce significantly despite various policies and strategies such as safe motherhood initiative and many others initiated to change the situation. Most maternal deaths (295000) occurred in developing countries and most could have been prevented with timely access to emergency obstetric care. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) alone accounted for roughly two-thirds of maternal deaths, and Nigeria is among these countries. This study investigated factors that contribute to delays among women seeking emergency obstetric care.

**Methods:** A mixed method was utilized. The population for the study were women aged 15-49 years who had experience direct obstetric complications and were attending the health facility for care at the time of this study. 318 women completed the questionnaires, whilst in-depth interviews were held for six women who were conveniently selected from a large (318) quantitative respondent. Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used in collecting data for this study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyzed quantitative data using inferential, bivariate analysis, and logistic regression was used to test predictive power of the predictor variables; whilst a qualitative content analysis was carried out on the qualitative data.

**Results:** Cost of transportation was ( $P=0.003$ ) associated to good decision-making to seek maternal health care services, with those who did not pay for transportation and those that paid little amount having more good decision to seek care than those with high cost of transportation. Quality of care at the facility equally had an impact on maternal service utilization as the likelihood of non-service utilization was significantly lower when quality of care was reported to be optimal (AOR: 0.37, 95% CI: 0.17, 0.82).

**Conclusions:** The variables that were found to be significantly influencing decision to utilize maternal health care services include cost of transportation, distance and quality of care.

**Keywords:** Factors associated, Maternal health care services, Health facilities, Nigeria

**Abbreviations:** SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences; SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa

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