
Children and Family Health Services

Maternal and Child Health Report

Focus on Hamilton County Women and Children

Volume 3 Issue 6

June 1998

PRENATAL CARE UTILIZATION IN HAMILTON COUNTY: 1996.

This issue of the Maternal and Child Health Report presents data on prenatal care utilization among Hamilton County women for 1996. At the national level, the proportion of women who began care early and received at least the recommended number of visits (according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' guidelines) increased between 1981 and 1995. This finding is based on the use of the Kotelchuck Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization (APNCU) Index.¹

In addition to the trend of increased prenatal care use, recent research also suggests that the percentage of women who received intensive prenatal care (i.e., more than the recommended number of visits) increased from 18.4 percent in 1981 to 28.8 percent in 1995. Women having multiples were much more likely to have had intensive prenatal care compared to women having singletons.²

Among Hamilton County residents, 10.6 percent received inadequate prenatal care in 1996, according to the APNCU index, which defines inadequate prenatal care as either the late initiation of care (i.e., after the 4th month of pregnancy) or by receiving less than 50 percent of the recommended visits. Across Hamilton County neighborhoods, however, there was wide variation in the proportion of pregnant women who received inadequate prenatal care in 1996, as shown in Table 1. Table 1 also shows the 95 percent confidence intervals for the estimates. Neighborhoods varied from having 0 percent of women receiving inadequate prenatal care (e.g., Indian Hill) to over 30 percent (e.g., Lincoln Heights). It is important to note that the confidence intervals are rather wide in neighborhoods with a small number of births,

which means that their estimates are less precise than others. Map 1 shows the distribution of neighborhoods where inadequate care was more prevalent (e.g., greater than or equal to 15 percent within a neighborhood).

With respect to intensive prenatal utilization, 32.1 percent of Hamilton County residents received more than 109.99% of the recommended visits and this figure varied by type of delivery. That is, among multiples 81.4 percent received intensive care while among singletons, 32.6 percent of pregnancies received intensive care. The trend toward intensive prenatal care in some pregnancies has major cost implications in light of the fact that the rates of preterm delivery and low birth weight have not improved over time.³

¹ Kotelchuck, M. *Am J Public Health* 84(9): 1994.

² Kogan et al., *JAMA*, 279(20): 1998

³ Ibid.

*This report is produced by the CFHS
Women's and Children's Health
Outcomes Program.*

Edward F. Donovan, M.D., Director

Pamela A. Dooley, M.A., Project Analyst

P.O. Box 670541, Cincinnati, OH 45267-0541

Phone: 513-558-0005

Fax: 513-558-7770

E-Mail: donovaef@email.uc.edu

