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Use of complementary and alternative medicine in pregnancy and its impact on obstetric outcome

Juliana Yusof, Zaleha Abdullah Mahdy and Rushdan Mohd Noor
UiTM, Malaysia

Objective: The objective of the study is to evaluate the prevalence of use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in a Malaysian antenatal population and its impact on obstetric outcome.

Design: Cross sectional study in Obstetric Unit, Hospital Sultanah Bahiyah, Alor Setar, Kedah, Malaysia was performed.

Results: Out of 447 women, the overall prevalence of CAM usage in pregnancy was 85.2%. It was popular among pregnant mothers aged between 26-35 years old and most commonly used in the third trimester ($p=.0.010$) to facilitate labour. Traditional herbs were the commonest type of CAM used in pregnancy (58.3%) followed by selusuh (24.3%). About 78.5% of the CAM users delivered vaginally ($p=0.020$) but a significant proportion (14.3%) had fetal distress ($p=0.035$) compared to non CAM users. The most common type of herbs used was akar kayu bunga Fatimah (37.7%) and gamat (13.4%). In our study, usage of selusuh product and akar kayu bunga Fatimah had a significant impact in achieving vaginal delivery and shortened the duration of labour particularly in multiparae. The usage of Kacip Fatimah and Salindah was associated with preterm labour ($p=0.04$). Tongkat Ali herbal coffee had a significant association with hypertensive disorders in pregnancy ($p=0.011$) and fetal distress ($p=0.04$). Meanwhile, the usage of Jamu Mustika Ratu was significantly associated with low birth weight in grandmultiparae ($p=0.026$) and spirulina was significantly associated with oligohydramnios ($p=0.04$).

Conclusion: Usage of CAM in pregnancy in the Malaysian population is of high prevalence. CAM in pregnancy has both beneficial and adverse obstetric outcomes. More research is needed to establish the safety of usage of various forms of CAM in pregnancy.

Biography

Juliana Yusof graduated from the National University of Malaysia (UKM) in 2005. She obtained her Master of Obstetric & Gynaecology in 2014 from UKM of which she was trained at Sultanah Bahiyah's Hospital, Alor Star Malaysia from 2009-2012. She is now a Lecturer in Obstetric and Gynaecology in Faculty of Medicine in University Institute Technology of MARA (UiTM) Sg Buloh and also works in Sungai Buloh's Hospital as an Obstetrician & Gynaecologist. As a Lecturer, she is active in coordinating clinical exams for undergraduate students.

juliana.yusof@yahoo.com

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