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Predictors of nurses' and midwives' intentions to provide maternal and child healthcare services to adolescents in South Africa

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Background: Adolescent mothers are at a much higher risk for maternal mortality compared to mothers aged 20 years and above. Newborns born to adolescent mothers are also more likely to have low birth weight, with the risk of long-term effects such as early onset of adult diabetes than newborns of older mothers. Few studies have investigated the determinants of adequate quality maternal and child healthcare services to pregnant adolescents. This study was conducted to gain an understanding of nurse-midwives' intentions to provide maternal and child healthcare and family planning services to adolescents in South Africa.

Methods: A total of 190 nurses and midwives completed a cross-sectional survey. The survey included components on demographics, knowledge of maternal and child healthcare and family planning services, attitude towards family planning services, subjective norms regarding maternal and child healthcare and family planning services, self-efficacy with maternal and child healthcare and family planning services, and intentions to provide maternal and child healthcare and family planning services to adolescents.

Results: Self-efficacy to conduct maternal and child healthcare services ($\beta = .55$, $p < 0.01$) and years of experience as a nurse- midwife ($\beta = .16$, $p = 0.05$) were associated with stronger intentions to provide maternal and child healthcare services. Family planning self-efficacy ($\beta = .30$, $p < 0.01$) and positive family planning attitudes ($\beta = .19$, $p = 0.05$) were associated with stronger intentions to provide family planning services.

Conclusions: Self-efficacy has a strong and positive association with the intention to provide both maternal and child healthcare and family planning services, while there is a moderate association with norms. There is a need to address nurses and midwives' psychosocial determinants of maternal and child healthcare and family planning services in order to improve quality of maternal and child healthcare and family planning services and its utilization by adolescents in South Africa.

Keywords: Nurse, Midwife, Intention, Knowledge, Attitude, Subjective norms, Adolescents, Maternal healthcare, Child healthcare, Family planning, Psychosocial determinants

Biography

Kim Jonas has completed her undergraduate studies and MA from the University of the Western Cape (SA). She is currently a PhD student at Maastricht University (NL), at the School for Public Health and Primary Care (CAPHRI). She is an enthusiastic young researcher who recently published her very first authored paper from her masters' thesis and a few co-authored papers with colleagues from the HSRC. Her research interests are centered on adolescent health, maternal and child healthcare, and healthcare systems. She is also interested on the use e-Health technologies for improving access to and utilization of maternal and child healthcare services.

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