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**MALE PARTNERS' VIEWS OF INVOLVEMENT IN MATERNAL HEALTH
CARE SERVICES AT MAKHADO B LOCAL AREA CLINICS IN VHEMBE
DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Male partners have a strong influence on the confinement and health of their wives and access to care. Their involvement is critical in the delivery and uptake of maternal health care services. This study sought to determine the male partners' views on their involvement in maternal health care services.

Methods

A qualitative design, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature, was used. The study was conducted at Makhado B local area clinics; namely, Kutama, Madombidzha and Vleifontein clinics which fall under the Makhado Municipality in the Vhembe District of Limpopo of Province in South Africa. The sample consisted of 10 participants whose partners were pregnant within the last 2 years. Non-probability, purposive sampling was used. Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews and field notes using a voice recorder to capture the interviews. Data analysis was done through open coding. Trustworthiness was ensured through the following measures: credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability.

Results and Discussion

The findings revealed two themes, namely, maternal health issues viewed as women matters and voluntary participation of male partners in maternal health issues versus cultural taboos.

Conclusion

The recommendations from this study were made to facilitate promotion of involving male partners in maternal health care services, particularly by health service policy makers. Also, suggestions for further research were offered. Health services managers should assist with facilities to establish community outreach, clinic-based education and couple-oriented counselling interventions. This would improve the male involvement behaviours among men who should be given the information, education and communication (IEC) materials on the relevant maternal health issues.

Keywords: views, partners, involvement, maternal health care services, antenatal care, labour and postnatal care.

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