

## Preferred Method of Delivery amongst Women of Reproductive Age in South-South Nigeria

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### Abstract

Choice of delivery is as important as getting pregnant for the first time. Delivery could be spontaneous vagina delivery (SVD) or caesarean section (CS). African culture believes in spontaneous vagina delivery which it cannot be compromised. This study is to evaluate the Preferred Method of Delivery Amongst Women of Reproductive Age in South-South, Nigeria. This was a cross-sectional study involving 260 females who were within the age of 18 to 45 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the researchers. The study lasted for a period of 6 months. The study revealed that 51.4% of the participants have tertiary level of education, 43.8% had secondary level and 4.8% had primary level of education. 69.5% of the participants were married, 24.8% were single, 1.9% were cohabiting and 3.8% are widow. 96.0% are Christian, 3.0% were Moslem and 1.0% were African Traditional Believers. 72.4% of the participants were pregnant and 27.6% were not pregnant. 97.1% of the participants have preferred method of delivery and 77.9% preferred spontaneous vaginal delivery and 22.1% preferred cesarean section. Also, the study revealed the reason why the most of the participants preferred spontaneous vaginal delivery as culture (13.6%), pride (11.4%), religion (20.8%), cost (32.8%) and fear (16.8%).

**Keywords:** Preferred, Method, Delivery, Reproductive, Age, Women.

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### INTRODUCTION

Previous studies revealed that caesarean delivery is another method of delivery carried out in situations where vaginal delivery cannot be achieved or in high-risk pregnancy (Lawson & Bienstock, 2007; Joy & Contag, 2011). Caesarean delivery rate is 25.7% worldwide and 3.6% is carried out without a medical indication (WHO). It has also been established that in the caesarean deliveries performed with or without

medical indication, death and serious complications were much more common compared to spontaneous vaginal deliveries (Souza *et al.*, 2010). WHO suggests that caesarean delivery rates should not exceed 10-15% (WHO, 1985). Study by Sapountzi-Krepia *et al.*, (2010), revealed that, in Greece, women would prefer for their next delivery, the vast majority (81.5%) chose vaginal delivery and 15% stated that they would prefer a CS. Inpatient bed capacity and human resources are usually sufficient in developed countries, and this

usually has an increasing effect upon caesarean delivery rates, on the other hand, in situations where the financial expenses are covered by public funds, the caesarean rates are usually lower (Lauer *et al.*, 2010). Pregnant who underwent a caesarean delivery before, can be delivered by normal vaginal delivery.

Reasons for the high cesarean section rate in Turkey include: physician fear of litigation, midwife lack of skill in actively following up of pregnancies and deliveries, and women's preference for an elective cesarean section and expanding cesarean indications (Ministry of Health Turkey, 2010). Clement, (2001), says that pregnant women's idea of a natural, vaginal birth will cause them to have a negative perception about cesarean section, but the idea that a cesarean birth is a feature of modern life and technology, may cause them to have a positive perception about cesarean section.

Study by Akkus *et al*, (2017), revealed that, women with higher level of education were significantly more likely to prefer a cesarean birth.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study involving pregnant women who were within the age of 18 to 45 years. 106 women participated in the study. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after a well-informed consent was granted. The study lasted for a period of 6 weeks. Statistical analysis of data was done using excel and P value < 0.05 was considered significant for data.

## RESULTS

The research findings revealed that, 25.5% of the participants were between the 18-24 years of age, 40.8% were between 25-31years, 24.5% were between 32-38 and 9.2% were between 39-45 years (Table 1). The results showed that 4.8% of the participants had primary level of education, 43.8% had secondary and 51.4% had tertiary level of education (Table 2). 14.4% of the respondents carried out farming, 36.7% were doing business and 48.9% were civil servants (Table 3). 22.1% preferred having C/S and 77.9% preferred SVD (Table 4). 81.4% had Complications from C/S and 18.6% from SVD respectively (Table 6).

**Table 1: Age distribution**

| 18-24  | 25-31  | 32-38  | 39-45 |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| 25     | 40     | 24     | 9     |
| 25.51% | 40.82% | 24.49% | 9.18% |

**Table 2: Level of education**

| FORMAL | PRIMARY | SECONDARY | TERTIARY |
|--------|---------|-----------|----------|
| 0      | 5       | 46        | 54       |
| 0%     | 4.76%   | 43.81%    | 51.43%   |

**Table 3: Occupational status**

| FARMING | TRADING | CIVIL SERVANT |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| 13      | 33      | 44            |
| 14.44%  | 36.67%  | 48.89%        |

**Table 4: Preferred method of delivery**

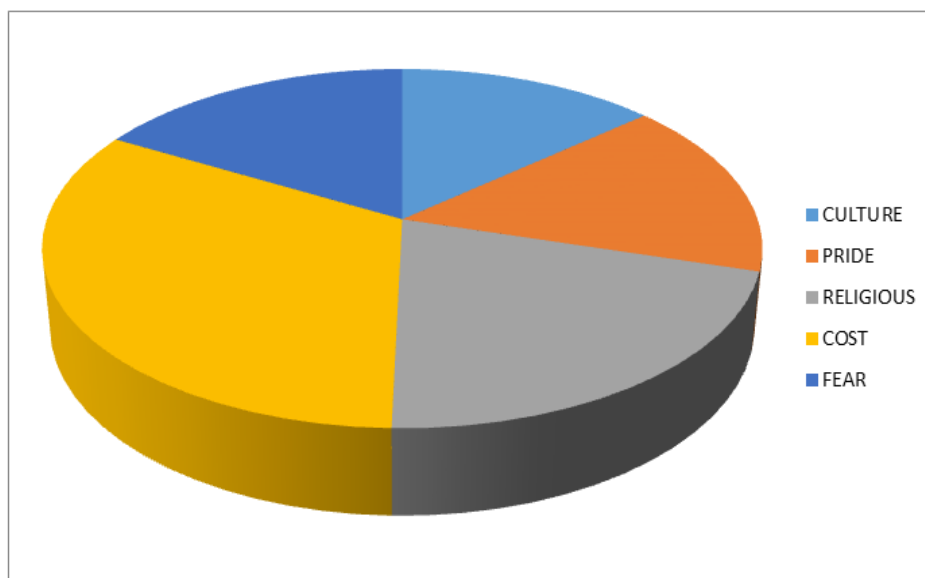
| C/S    | SVD    |
|--------|--------|
| 23     | 81     |
| 22.12% | 77.88% |

**Table 5: Reasons for preferred method of delivery (SVD)**

| CULTURE | PRIDE  | RELIGION | COST  | FEAR  |
|---------|--------|----------|-------|-------|
| 17      | 20     | 26       | 41    | 21    |
| 13.6%   | 11.43% | 20.8%    | 32.8% | 16.8% |

**Table 6: Complications from preferred method of delivery**

| CS     | NVD    |
|--------|--------|
| 70     | 16     |
| 81.40% | 18.60% |



**Fig. 1: Reasons for Preferring SVD**

## DISCUSSION

There are several methods of delivery across the globe. Delivery is a component of reproductive process and it is the last stage of reproductive process. It is important to note that pregnancy outcome will determine choice of delivery. However, in developed countries, irrespective of pregnancy outcome, most women choose caesarean section (C/S) as their preferred method of delivery. In African culture, natural spontaneous vagina delivery is what the people believe and expect.

The study revealed that 72.4% of the participants were pregnant and 27.2% of the participants were not pregnant. 97.1% of them agreed that, they have preferred method of delivery. The study shows that, 77.9% of the participants preferred delivery through spontaneous vagina delivery (SVD) and 22.1% preferred delivery through caesarean section (C/S). In most African culture, delivery through natural means (spontaneous vagina delivery) without interference is welcome. It is the joy of every mother to have natural spontaneous delivery in African's culture. It is believed that when a pregnant mother deliver through spontaneous vagina delivery, the celebration is much and they are widely accepted and welcome into the society than any other method of delivery. This acceptance by African's culture could be one of the reason the study revealed greater percentage of the participants preferred SVD. This study agreed with previous study by Sapountzi-Krepia *et al.*, (2010), which revealed that, Greece women about 81.5% prefer vaginal delivery and 15% stated that they would prefer a C/S. 51.4% of the participants had tertiary level of education. Despite the high level of education of the participants, they still preferred SVD as their method of delivery. This is because African's pride is spontaneous vagina delivery. However, majority of them delivered

without complications. It is believed that majority of pregnant women who do not have any risk associated with the ongoing pregnancy will definitely prefer spontaneous vagina delivery. In this study, 22.1% of the participants preferred caesarean section as their method of delivery. However, there are pregnant women who believe in delivery without conscious stress and chose caesarean section. Furthermore, 92.4% of the small group of the participants who chose caesarean section as their preferred method did so for the reason that, it is stress less, faster and simple. Unlike the SVD that the process is tedious and despite that, it is still the most preferred method of delivery in our society. Also, both the Christians and Moslem faithful chose SVD as their preferred method of delivery.

Again, the study revealed that, the participants have various reasons of choosing spontaneous vagina delivery as their preferred method of delivery. 32.8% of them said cost of caesarean section is too high, 20.8% said their religion, 16.8% said fear of undergoing C/S, 13.6% said it is their culture and 11.4% said it the pride of a woman to deliver through SVD. These are the various reasons why the participants chose SVD as their preferred method of delivery. Majority of them said cost of caesarean section is high and that they cannot afford such bills. Some of them also said that their religion believes so much in delivery through natural spontaneous vagina delivery and that gives the woman's pride. Fear of passing through C/S was another reason why some of the participants opted for SVD.

48.9% of the participants are civil servants and 36.6% are business women. Despite the money they could have due to their occupation, majority of them still preferred spontaneous vagina delivery. In Africa, no matter the high level of education and the wealth

they have, SVD still becomes their most preferred method of delivery. Despite the pains, stress and the time it takes to deliver by the women during the process of delivery, it does not change their belief in choosing SVD. African women see spontaneous vagina delivery as pride of an African woman.

17% of the participants said they have undergone both the spontaneous vagina delivery and caesarean section and majority of the participants (81.4%), agreed that caesarean section has complications than spontaneous vagina delivery.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows the preferred method of delivery amongst 106 women within their reproductive age was high and both Christian and Muslim respondents preferred normal vagina delivery and their preference can be traced to fear, pride, religious and cultural reasons. Regardless of the preference of SVD, 2.9% of the population has had C/S and their preference for C/S was that, it is stress less, faster and simple.

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