**Interview details**

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| Participant ID | PWKAT04E |
| Municipality | Kathmandu |
| Occupation | Housewife |
| Education (grade) | SLC |
| Type of household | Nuclear |
| Ethnicity | Dalit |
| Nb of pregnancies before this one | 1 |
| Gestation age in months | 8 |
| Interviewer | Bibhu Thapaliya |
| Date | 12/03/2023 |
| Name of translator | Merina Dahal |
| Name of transcriber | Merina Dahal |

# **Interview**

# PARTICIPANT:

They did not inform us about the baby's condition. We cannot read the ultrasound report and cannot figure it out on our own. I even don't know whether the doctors are a trainee or experienced ones.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did you come to the maternity hospital because it is better for pregnant women?

# PARTICIPANT:

Well! I came to the hospital because of the facilities for pregnant women. But when I came for the consultation, the ticket counter informed me that today was not the day for my visit so, I have to return back. It is mentioned on the card to come on Thursday, but how am I supposed to know whether the doctors will be available? On top of that, in the laboratory, they had to draw blood three times.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did they draw blood three times?

# PARTICIPANT:

They drew my blood and dispatched it in three different bottles without informing me what tests are done from those blood samples. And urine samples were placed in two different bottles but did not inform me at all whether the reports were fine or not.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did they tell you when you should come to pick up your reports?

# PARTICIPANT:

They told me to pick up my reports after three days. But when I took those reports to show to the doctors, they told me that today is not the day to show the reports. Because of this, I didn't meet the doctor timely. When I can't show the reports to the doctor then obviously I get anxious about what might happen to me or whether my baby is doing well. What else can I do except go back home? It was my turn to come today, but they told me to come back on Wednesday. I cannot come every Wednesday.

# INTERVIEWER:

So, today...

# PARTICIPANT:

Today my appointment wasn't cancelled. They did see me and my reports. My first baby was a cesarian delivery. This is my second pregnancy. They asked me to get admitted. I am not even nine months running and I feel okay. What's the point to be admitted if I am feeling good? They asked me to stamp a consent form that indicated that I do not want to get admitted and that it is my decision. But if I am in a difficult situation, I have to come to the hospital, don't I?

# INTERVIEWER:

Yes, of course.

# PARTICIPANT:

But if I come to the hospital after signing the form, the doctors might not look after me. They asked me to sign a paper that indicated that I took the decision to go back home and that I did not agree to get admitted.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did they tell you if there were any issues?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, there weren't any issues. When I ask them about the baby, they told me that my baby is fine and his heartbeat is normal. So, if everything is okay, what's the purpose of getting admitted now?

# INTERVIEWER:

In your view, if they had told you about why you were getting admitted, then it would have been easy for you to understand, isn't it?

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, exactly. I asked them and they told me that my previous wound might open if we do not operate on time. But it's been six years so the wound might have healed, won't it? That's why I wanted to go home, but I was asked to sign a consent form. They don't normally operate before nine months are completed.

# INTERVIEWER:

How long have you been pregnant?

# PARTICIPANT:

Eighth month running. My due date is 2079/12/3.

# INTERVIEWER:

If admitted then they will keep you in the general ward with others?

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, in the general ward with other patients.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did they plan anything after your admission?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, they did not. They told me to get admitted but there's no reason to do so, why should I? I am neither feeling uncomfortable nor my water has broken.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did you ask them all these things or not?

# PARTICIPANT:

I asked them why I should get admitted now. They replied that since my first child was a cesarian section, and it is my second pregnancy, then it was time for me to get admitted. The doctor that does my regular check-ups informed me. But if everything is normal and my baby is doing fine, why should I get admitted? So, when I told them this, they asked me to sign the consent paper.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did they tell you when you can come since you didn't agree to get admitted now?

# PARTICIPANT:

The doctor who wrote this told me to not worry. They told me that if I start getting contractions, I don't have to meet any doctor. I should just go immediately to the emergency for admission.

# INTERVIEWER:

It means there are no specific issues that compelled the doctors to plan your operation.

# PARTICIPANT:

No, there aren't.

# INTERVIEWER:

Will you come again on Wednesday for a check-up?

# PARTICIPANT:

They have asked me to come on next Wednesday so I will. By that time, my due date will be met.

# INTERVIEWER:

You went for antenatal check-ups at the Grande hospital but there is a government hospital too near that area. Why did you decide to come to the maternity hospital? Is it because the facilities are better?

# PARTICIPANT:

Rather than facilities, I gave birth to my first baby here so I am familiar with the hospital and everything. I was advised by a nurse during check-ups. That's why I opted to come here. I was seven centimetres dilated when I went into labour. I had to go for a caesarian section because of complications that my baby had to face. Although my baby was fine, I had to stay in hospital for six days because of a fever. Why should I get admitted if I am fine and do not have any complications?

# INTERVIEWER:

How old were you when you gave birth to your first child?

# PARTICIPANT:

I am 26 years old right now.

# INTERVIEWER:

How long have you been staying here?

# PARTICIPANT:

It will be a year this coming Baishakh [the first month of the year according to the Nepali calendar].

# INTERVIEWER:

What do you do?

# PARTICIPANT:

Nothing much. I stay at home.

# INTERVIEWER:

What is the ward number of the place where you stay?

# PARTICIPANT:

Ward number 6.

# INTERVIEWER:

Till which grade have you studied?

# PARTICIPANT:

Till grade 10. I have completed my school leaving certificate level.

# INTERVIEWER:

How many members are there in your family? Do you live with your in-laws?

# PARTICIPANT:

Here in Kathmandu, it is me, my husband, and my son.

# INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember how many times have you come for an antenatal checkup?

# PARTICIPANT:

It's been three times so far.

# INTERVIEWER:

In your eighth month of pregnancy, this is your third visit?

# PARTICIPANT:

I came for an antenatal checkup for the first time when I was three months pregnant, then the second time was when I was four months pregnant, and then a third was when I was seven months running.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did you take a blood test during your first visit?

# PARTICIPANT:

I took a blood test when I was three months pregnant.

# INTERVIEWER:

Do you know what tests were done?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, I don't. I wasn't informed.

# INTERVIEWER:

Not even if there's a lack of anything in your blood?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, nothing.

# INTERVIEWER:

Sometimes, it is necessary to ask them for the results.

# PARTICIPANT:

I do but they responded back to me saying we look after 500-600 patients every day so it is impossible to tell everyone everything.

# INTERVIEWER:

HIV is a sensitive topic. Even the husband and the children might need to get tested too if the mother is found to be positive. In your view, do you think the one-to-one counselling session is important and crucial?

# PARTICIPANT:

It is extremely important but the doctors here tell you that they have to look after a lot of patients every day so it is difficult for them to counsel everyone. However, I think it is important to let the patient know if there are any issues with their reports. When I came here when I was three months pregnant, the doctor asked me if I had taken calcium and iron. But when I came back for my check-up while I was four months pregnant, the attending doctor did not even take my blood pressure or ask me about my medicine. It is difficult to meet the same doctor again.

# INTERVIEWER:

Can we request to meet the doctor of our choice?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, we cannot. For that, you need to have a connection within the hospital. If you know someone here, then you neither have to stand in a queue nor have to take the ticket. Otherwise, they send us to doctors or nurses who are still learning. They have no idea how the patient is, or the heartbeat of the baby, and because of this I don't feel like questioning my queries to them either.

# INTERVIEWER:

Did any of your relatives or close ones face these issues?

# PARTICIPANT:

I haven't asked anyone. Some go to private...

# INTERVIEWER:

Any of your close friends?

# PARTICIPANT:

They do but they have met good doctors. That's it.

# INTERVIEWER:

The infrastructures of Kathmandu are better than that outside the valley but what about the hospitals at the provincial level?

# PARTICIPANT:

In our village, there are all the facilities such as ultrasound, and laboratory for blood tests and they even refer it to the Dhading hospital.

# INTERVIEWER:

Is your maternal house in Dhading?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, my maternal house is in Syangja. My sister-in-law did all her treatment in my village's hospital, and the facilities are pretty nice. Also, the government hospital in my village will convey to you whether it's a boy or a girl. But not at this maternity hospital.

# INTERVIEWER:

It depends upon the doctor too and some might try to abort the baby so they don't tell you such information easily.

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, true. But they could tell us. After all, I am the mother of the child.

# INTERVIEWER:

How is the behaviour of the health workers?

# PARTICIPANT:

Well! The doctors are okay but the people who stay at the ticket counter and those who manage the line aren't that satisfactory.

# INTERVIEWER:

How long does it take to stand in a queue and meet the doctor?

# PARTICIPANT:

It depends. I mean sometimes it takes 2-3 hours and sometimes even a whole day without eating any food.

# INTERVIEWER:

How affordable is the hospital?

# PARTICIPANT:

This hospital is cheaper than others. I paid Rs.2280 for my blood and urine tests when I was four months pregnant and Rs.600 for an ultrasound. Other private hospitals are much more expensive than that. This is quite affordable.

# INTERVIEWER:

Were you anxious when the health workers drew blood samples for the test?

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, I was. That’s a reason why I asked them about blood tests.

# INTERVIEWER:

Our research talks a bit about HIV too. I want to ask you questions related to that. Do you know anyone who might have HIV?

# PARTICIPANT:

No.

# INTERVIEWER:

Anyone who is pregnant and has HIV?

# PARTICIPANT:

Not that I am aware of.

# INTERVIEWER:

Have you heard of Bhiringi, also known as syphilis?

# PARTICIPANT:

Ahh is it the one that affects the sex organs?

# INTERVIEWER:

Yes, it is the one.

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, I have heard of it.

# INTERVIEWER:

What about Hepatitis B?

# PARTICIPANT:

I have heard of it. Isn't Hepatitis B and C a kind of disease that happens when there's a lack of vitamin B and C in the body?

# INTERVIEWER:

No, no it is not. It's a sexually transmitted disease.

# PARTICIPANT:

Is it a communicable disease?

# INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

# PARTICIPANT:

What are the symptoms?

# INTERVIEWER:

Hepatitis B and syphilis symptoms are visible immediately, unlike HIV.

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, it takes about three months to show symptoms of HIV.

# INTERVIEWER:

Yes. Have you taken any training or are you a health professional?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, no I am not. I just read it during school when I volunteered for the Red Cross.

# INTERVIEWER:

Many people haven't heard of the symptoms of syphilis and hepatitis B.

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, even I have no idea about the symptoms of these diseases.

# INTERVIEWER:

Fever, flu-like symptoms, fatigue, weakness, and diarrhea are the common symptoms. Similarly, small blisters like projection all over the body especially around the sex organs. In several scenarios, it gets better with time but if the infection spreads everywhere then it may be difficult to manage.

# PARTICIPANT:

Does it cause urine infection too?

# INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

# INTERVIEWER:

Do you know anyone who might have hepatitis B?

# PARTICIPANT:

No.

# INTERVIEWER:

It gets transmitted from mother to child but if treatment is given time then it is possible to prevent it to get transmitted from mother to child. It may get transmitted from breast milk too if the mother is infected. This is a sensitive topic for many and people may feel shy to talk about it.

# PARTICIPANT:

Exactly.

# INTERVIEWER:

We had conducted this research in Kapilvastu too and had conversations with pregnant women and their mothers-in-law. Comparatively, mothers-in-law were more open to talk and share their experiences than daughters-in-law.

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes. But in those places, girls are still kept in cowsheds during their period, isn't it?

# INTERVIEWER:

It is improving in comparison to the past. Do you think there should be a separate counseling for these diseases?

# PARTICIPANT:

They don't have enough time to look at the patients so counseling is difficult to be done.

# INTERVIEWER:

In your view, what can we do to make things easy in health posts? Because comparatively health posts are less likely to have a huge patient flow than hospitals.

# PARTICIPANT:

I haven't found such counseling facilities to date in the health post. Moreover, in the village area, women are scared to talk about their issues openly...

# INTERVIEWER:

But FCHVs are here to help.

# PARTICIPANT:

Yes, they are but it is difficult to approach them and encourage them to talk about it openly.

# INTERVIEWER:

Do you think it is appropriate and necessary to give counseling regarding STDs to both husband and wife?

# PARTICIPANT:

Of course it is. It becomes more fruitful when counseling comprises both couples. It will be a good thing and help each other to recognize how we can prevent it and reduce the transmission rate.

# INTERVIEWER:

Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

# PARTICIPANT:

No, there isn't.