

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Swaziland's Traditional Birth Attendants Survey

Lech M.M¹ and Mngadi P.T²

Director of Fertility and Sterility Research Center, 2/4/6 Lucka Str., 00-845 Warsaw, Poland, e-mail: medardlech@poczta.onet.pl Patricia ThuliMngadi DN¹; Faculty of Health Science, University of Swaziland, Mbabane, Swaziland²

*For Correspondence: E-mail: medardlech@poczta.onet.pl

Abstract

The Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) Survey in Swaziland was undertaken between March 27th 1996 and April 8th 1996. The objective of the survey was to generate reliable information regarding activities of TBAs in Swaziland. The survey was conducted in 25 Chiefdoms sampled out of a total of 206 Chiefdoms registered in Swaziland. The total number of sampled respondents in the 25 Chiefdoms was 721. From the survey, it is estimated that there were probably 3000 TBAs in the country, and in the majority of cases such TBAs would be a 51-year old woman who herself had delivered six children and had worked as a TBA for at least 10 years. Between 9,000 and 12,000 deliveries are estimated to take place out of health facilities. Of these many, nearly 43.5% are assisted by "TBAs"; 16.3% of woman interviewed deliver relative/family member and 15.1% are assisted by friends/neighbours, etc. Some of TBAs carry out procedures which are considered to be potentially harmful. Nearly 30% of TBAs have administered herbs; 45% attend to abnormal deliveries (breech and multiple pregnancies); 26.7% re-use their cord cutting tools and in the case of haemorrhage 23.4% do manual procedures within reproductive tract of delivering women. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2005; 9[3]:137-147)

Keywords: Home delivery, Traditional medicine, Africa, Safe motherhood, Maternal mortality

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