

## MATERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LOW BIRTH WEIGHT IN WEST POKOT COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract

Worldwide an estimated 20% babies are born LBW and the impact on infant mortality is enormous. Child survival and development need more focus on healthy start of life. A broad range of maternal factors have shown strong influence on giving birth to LBW babies whereas information available was not documented for West Pokot County and considerable variations observed within different settings based on context. The objective of this study was to investigate maternal characteristics associated with LBW. Cross sectional hospital based mixed study design was employed to collect maternal demographic socio-economic, obstetric and cultural information from women of reproductive age in seven (7) randomly selected health facilities. A sample size of 223 eligible biological mothers of infants (< 12 months old), randomly recruited upon provision of informed consent, participated in this study. Quantitative data were collected using interviewer administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were analyzed and presented in frequencies and proportions and associations maternal characteristics on birth weight was examined for relationships and chi square tests done to confirm their statistical significance. Significant associations were observed among five maternal characteristics including; Maternal nutrition; MUAC (B = 1.890, p=0.045), Antenatal Care attendance (B=2.236 p<0.001), Mothers education (B = 1.399, p=0.003), marital status (B=-5.647, p<0.001), FGM (B = 1.532, p<0.001). The implication of this study results was that mother's socio demographic and cultural characteristics strongly predict mother giving birth to a LBW baby. Interventions that focus on improving the socio demographic characteristics recommended for implementation to improve the birth outcome (LBW).

Key Words: Maternal, Influence, Low Birth Weight, West Pokot

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