

Community Antenatal Midwifery Services

Module code LCHS4003

Module Title;Health and Social Care

Student Name;Pauline Ani

Student ID;2537257

Lecturers Name;Dbora Odeh

Date ;19/10/2026

Introduction;

Pregnancy is an important stage in a woman's life, and receiving proper care during this period, helps protect the health of both mother and baby. However, some women face difficulties accessing healthcare, especially those living in rural communities. Community antenatal midwifery services help address this problem by providing pregnancy care, advice and support closer to where women live. This essay discusses the meaning, history, functions and importance of these services, including their strengths and limitations.

Explanation of the service;

Community antenatal midwifery services involve the care provided by qualified midwives to women during pregnancy in community clinics, primary healthcare centers and, where appropriate, through home visits. The main aim is to monitor the health of the mother and baby, identify possible complications early and prepare women for childbirth.

During antenatal appointments, midwives check blood pressure, monitor pregnancy progress, arrange necessary tests and provide advice on nutrition, personal hygiene and healthy practices. They also explain warning signs that require medical attention. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO 2016), antenatal care should promote a positive pregnancy experience through health education, preventive care and early identification of complications.

History and Development of the service;

Midwifery has existed for centuries, with experienced women supporting mothers during pregnancy and childbirth. Traditionally, this care was often provided at home and influenced by local knowledge and cultural practices. As medical knowledge improved, healthcare professionals recognised the importance of regular pregnancy checks rather than providing care only during labour.

Antenatal services gradually developed to include health assessments, screening and education. In the UK, community-based maternity care is particularly important because some women experience long distances to healthcare facilities, transportation difficulties and financial challenges. Bringing services closer to communities can make pregnancy care more accessible.

The WHO (2016) recommends at least eight antenatal contacts during pregnancy to improve outcomes for mothers and babies. This highlights the importance of regular monitoring and support throughout pregnancy.

Functions of the service;

One major function of community antenatal midwifery services is monitoring maternal and foetal health. Midwives assess pregnant women for possible complications, such as high blood pressure, anaemia and infections. When problems are suspected, they arrange further assessment or refer women to hospitals for appropriate treatment.

Health education is another important responsibility. Midwives advise women about nutrition, prescribed supplements. They also help women prepare for childbirth by discussing suitable delivery facilities, transport arrangements and what to do in an emergency. In addition, midwives provide emotional support and answer questions about pregnancy and motherhood. They may also offer guidance on breastfeeding, newborn care and postnatal follow up. These activities help women feel more informed and prepare for childbirth.

Significance to Quality of life;Strengths and limitations.

Community antenatal midwifery services improve access to healthcare, particularly for women who live far from hospitals. Regular appointments help women understand their pregnancies and recognise warning signs early. Early identifications can reduce risks to both mothers and babies.

Another advantage is that community midwives can provide information in ways that are appropriate to local languages and cultural practices. This can encourage trust and make women more comfortable discussing their concerns.

However, several challenges affect these services. Some communities lack enough qualified midwives, while healthcare centres may have inadequate equipment, medicines and transport for referrals. Financial difficulties can also prevent women from attending appointments. In addition, cultural beliefs and limited awareness may discourage some women from seeking professional care.

Community midwifery services also have limitations because serious pregnancy complications may require specialised hospital treatment. Therefore, effective referral systems and cooperation between community clinics and hospitals are essential. The WHO and its partner organisations continue to emphasise the need to improve maternal healthcare and prevent avoidable maternal deaths (WHO et al. 2023).

Conclusion;

In conclusion, community antenatal midwifery services play an important role in protecting mothers and babies by providing pregnancy monitoring, health education and emotional support. They can improve access to healthcare and help identify complications early. However, shortages of trained midwives, inadequate resources and financial barriers remain significant challenges. Addressing these problems through better funding, staff training and antenatal services can contribute to healthier pregnancies and better outcomes for mothers and babies.

References

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2021, antenatal care, nice guideline NG201, viewed 13 October 2026. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng201>.

National population commission (NPC){ Nigeria}and ICF2019,Nigeria Demographic and Health survey 2018,NPC and ICF, Abuja,Nigeria, AND Rockville, Maryland,usa.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) n.d, Maternal and newborn health, viewed 13 October 2026,<https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal-newborn-health>.

United Nations population Fund(UNFPA)n.d, Midwifery, viewed 13 October 2026, <https://www.unfpa.org/midwifery>.

World Health Organisation(WHO)2026,WHO recommendations on antenatal care for a positive pregnancy experience,World Health Organisation, Geneva.

World Health Organisation,UNICEF,United Nations population Fund and World Bank group 2023,Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020,World Health Organisation, GENEVA.