

**AWARENESS AND USE OF FOLIC ACID FOR PREVENTION OF NEURAL TUBE DEFECTS
AMONG WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING AGE IN KURA, KANO STATE, NORTH-WESTERN
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The prevalence of neural tube defects in Kano state is one of the highest in the region according to current reports. The World Health Organization has recommended periconceptional folic acid supplementation to prevent the anomaly. The aim of this study was to assess the knowledge and use of folic acid among women of child-bearing age in Kura community, Kano state. A cross sectional, descriptive study was conducted amongst women attending Kura General Hospital for antenatal or postnatal care using interview-administered questionnaires. A total of 111 women took part in the study. 64.9% of respondents have heard of folic acid. 51.4% know that it is used in pregnancy while only 45% have taken folic acid in their current pregnancy. Although 66% indicated they took other blood supplements which usually contain folic acid. 83.7% admitted they do not know the reason for taking folic acid in pregnancy while 16.3% indicated they know why the drug is prescribed in pregnancy. Only 6.3% however were aware of the actual reason for its prescription in pregnancy. Chi-square test revealed a significant relationship between awareness of folic acid and planned pregnancy. No relationship was observed between educational status of respondent and awareness of folic acid or reason for its prescription in pregnancy at $p < 0.05$. None of the respondent got their information from the media nor could mention any natural source of folic acid. The study revealed a low awareness level which can be improved via comprehensive education plan, marriage counseling and media awareness campaign.