

**THE EFFECT OF MATERNAL HEALTH LITERACY ON
CHILD HEALTH PROMOTING BEHAVIOURS AMONG POST
NATAL MOTHERS IN SELECTED CLINICS IN LUSAKA AND
MAZABUKA DISTRICTS**

BY

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fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Education in
Literacy and Learning.**

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, **ARNOLD MUMENA** do hereby declare that this piece of work is my own, and that all the works of other persons have been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented at this university and indeed at any other university for similar purposes.

Signed.....Date.....

Signature of Supervisor.....Date.....

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by **ARNOLD MUMENA** is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife Rose KafwaMumena and our children; Kalela, Archie, Femiya, Andries, Aldridge, Rockaea and Soraya. Your ceaseless support and encouragement in moments when challenges appeared to have gotten the better of me is what I will live to remember. Above all, I would like to thank our Almighty Jehovah God for his indescribable gift of life.

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ABSTRACT

This study hypothesized in a correlation design that there was an association between maternal health literacy and child health promoting behaviours. Previous studies which have been large scale surveys have dwelt on education levels and dwelt on self-reported behaviours. They have treated education as a ‘black box’ and treated literacy as a simple ability, either present or absent which could easily be estimated. Both of Maternal health literacy and Child Health promoting behaviours among post-natal mothers in selected clinics in Lusaka and Mazabuka Districts were addressed.

The independent variable was maternal health literacy and the dependent variables were complete immunization and weight for age. The sample size was 181 mother and child pairs drawn from the 4 clinics. These were Chilenje and George clinics in Lusaka. The others were Ndeke and Kaleya clinics in Mazabuka.

All the data collection instruments were generated from the Children’s clinic card. Two literacy tests were administered; the Child Health Reading Comprehension Test and the Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine. A Child Health promoting behaviours questionnaire was also administered. It was translated into the local languages; Cinyanja and Citonga.

Correlations were done between maternal literacy tests’ results and immunization and weight for age. Data analysis was by version 20 of the SPSS software. Data was processed was by way of running frequency tables to show the distribution of some variables.

Correlations were positive and significant. The results showed that there was a strong association between Maternal Health literacy and Child Health promoting behaviours. The performance by

post-natal mothers in the reading test was not as good. Some were reading at the lower primary school level. Others could not just read. Post-natal mothers lacked reading skills and could not understand the information on the Children's clinic card although their child health promoting behaviours in terms of nutrition and complete immunization of their children were good. The results indicated that maternal literacy skills acquired in schools impact on the way a mother manages the health of her child. Recommendations included the incorporation of health knowledge in the primary school curricula and the introduction of adult education programmes to teach mothers literacy skills. Future research ought to take into account the role of households in promoting Child health.

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ACRONYMS

ARI.....Acute Respiratory Infection

BCG.....Bacille Calmette Guerin

CHRCT.....Child Health Reading Comprehension Test

DHS.....Demographic Health Survey

DPT.....Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus

GLSS.....Ghana Living Standards Survey

IHDS.....Indian Human Development Survey

MCH.....Maternal and Child Health

KDHS.....Kenya Demographic Health Survey

MCDMCH.....Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health

MOH.....Ministry of Health

NFHS.....National Family Health Survey

ORS.....Oral Rehydration Salts

RHF.....Recommended Home Fluids

REALM.....Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine

WFS.....World Fertility Survey

WHO.....World Health Organization