ABSTRACT

Hypertension disorders of pregnancy affect approximately 5-10% of pregnancies, and can lead to serious complications for both mother and child. Understanding it in terms of the host and behavioral risk factors is important for the prevention and control of hypertension among pregnant women in a particular setting. Furthermore, in sub-Saharan Africa very few studies have been carried out on these risk factors to inform the interventions. Consequently, there are limited evidence-based interventions. Therefore, we examined how the host and behavioral factors contribute to hypertension among pregnant women aged 15-49 years attending antenatal care at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital using both primary and secondary data. A total of 148 respondents aged 15-49 year were recruited using purposive sampling method. Hypertension was defined as an average of two blood pressure readings at single occasion with SBP $\geq$ 140mmHg or DBP $\geq$ 90 mmHg. Body weight, height and blood pressure were measured using standard procedures. The associations between the independent and dependable outcome was determined by Chi-square test, bivariate and multivariate regression analyses. Bivariate analyses were conducted to examine the associations between risk factors and hypertension. Multiple logistic regression was used to examine each significant risk factors on hypertension after adjusted for modifying factors. The findings of the study show that the host factors such BMI, gestation period, maternal age and family at risks had the significant associations with hypertension (p <0.05). Age and level of education had effect on the observed associations except for gestation period. This study found BMI, age at first birth and family history as risks to hypertension during pregnancy. Screening of pregnant women for known risk factors coupled with health education on symptoms of the disease are recommended. Furthermore, there should be more rigorous study using a biologic marker to detect more associations.