



# **Thriving Traditional Birth Attendants in the Nigerian Church: Gate-way to Maternal and Perinatal Mortality - A Typical Example of Conflict in the Church. Review of Practices of Traditional Birth Attendants across the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State – South South Nigeria**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author SE designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors DGBK and KO managed the analyses of the study. Author KO managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** There is need to educate the pastors and the church congregation for the need for skilled birth attendants to handle pregnancy and labour related challenges in order to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality.

This is because, in some “maternities” in Nigeria traditional birth attendants (TBAs) attend to pregnancy related cases and in some instances these unconventional practices are extended to the local churches.

**Aim:** To determine cases of TBAs practicing in churches and help prevent these unconventional obstetrics practices thus preventing maternal and perinatal mortality.

**Methods:** It was a cross-sectional study of TBAs across all 23 local government areas of Rivers State in a lecture to prevent maternal death in the month of June 2019 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

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Information was coded and analyzed using SPSS version 25.

**Results:** Forty questionnaires were distributed and 37 retrieved. The mean age was 44 years. They were all females. All of them were Christians.

Their modal age of practice was 1 – 5 years. As regards TBAs educational status, those with no formal education were 4 (10.8%), primary 6(16.2%), secondary 20 (54.1%) and tertiary 7 (18.9%). Eleven (29.7%) of the TBAs have ante natal care in the church out of which 6 (16.2%) conducts delivery in the church. Perinatal and maternal deaths recorded by the TBAs in the past 1 year were 7 (18.9%) and 1 (2.7%) respectively.

**Conclusion:** There is need for our Pastors and churches in Nigeria to recognize the place of skilled birth attendants in attending to pregnancy and labour in other to reduce maternal /perinatal mortality and discourage TBAs from practicing in the church.

In addition, the study revealed that majority of the TBAs had secondary level of education (54.1%). There is need for churches to encourage their members to seek the pre-requisite training by emphasizing acquiring the necessary education to improve their vocation as birth attendants.

*Keywords: Thriving; TBA; maternal; perinatal; mortality.*

## **DISCLAIMER**

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## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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