

INPLASY PROTOCOL

To cite: Gebregziabher et al.
Food taboos and their
perceived reasons among
pregnant women in Ethiopia: A
Systematic review, 2022.
Inplasy protocol 202310078.
doi:
10.37766/inplasy2023.1.0078

Received: 25 January 2023

Published: 25 January 2023

Corresponding author:
Gebretsadkan Gebremedhin
Gebretsadik

gere2023@gmail.com

Author Affiliation:
Department of Nutrition and
Dietetics, School of Public
Health, College of Health
Sciences, Mekelle University,
Tigray, Ethiopia.

Support: This study did not
receive any specific funding.

**Review Stage at time of this
submission:** Completed but not
published.

Conflicts of interest:
None declared.

Food taboos and their perceived reasons among pregnant women in Ethiopia: A Systematic review, 2022

Gebregziabher, H¹; Kahsay, A²; Gebrearegay, F³; Berhe, K⁴;
Gebremariam, A⁵; Gebretsadik, GG⁶.

Review question / Objective: The objective of this systematic review was to synthesize the available evidence on food taboos and their perceived reasons among pregnant women in Ethiopia to posit comprehensive and precise evidence for decision making. The systematic review has addressed the following two questions: What are the various foods considered taboos by pregnant women in Ethiopia? What are the perceived reasons for food taboos by pregnant women in Ethiopia?

Condition being studied: Undernutrition among pregnant women has been one of the serious public health challenges in Ethiopia. Food taboos prevent eating certain food items thus compromising one's dietary diversity and quality which, in turn, would lead to poor health and nutritional outcomes. Evidence shows that food taboos are largely associated with maternal and fetal malnutrition during pregnancy and could have consequences on the mothers and their children later in life. Realizing such associations between food taboos and maternal undernutrition which in turn has fatal consequences, this systematic review synthesized evidence on food taboos and their perceived reasons among pregnant women in Ethiopia.

INPLASY registration number: This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 25 January 2023 and was last updated on 25 January 2023 (registration number INPLASY202310078).

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective: The objective of this systematic review was to synthesize the available evidence on food taboos and their perceived reasons among pregnant

women in Ethiopia to posit comprehensive and precise evidence for decision making. The systematic review has addressed the following two questions: What are the various foods considered taboos by pregnant women in Ethiopia? What are the

perceived reasons for food taboos by pregnant women in Ethiopia?

Rationale: To our knowledge, there is paucity of systematically narrated evidence on food taboos and there is no systematic reviewed evidence on perceived reasons for food taboos among pregnant women in Ethiopia. Therefore, this systematic review is intended to synthesize information on the main foods considered taboos and their perceived reasons among pregnant women in Ethiopia using a systematic search of the available literatures. This would help to design and implement evidence-based interventions. Systematically addressing the reasons for food taboos could help develop tailored interventions with lasting solutions to the high levels of undernutrition in the country.

Condition being studied: Undernutrition among pregnant women has been one of the serious public health challenges in Ethiopia. Food taboos prevent eating certain food items thus compromising one's dietary diversity and quality which, in turn, would lead to poor health and nutritional outcomes. Evidence shows that food taboos are largely associated with maternal and fetal malnutrition during pregnancy and could have consequences on the mothers and their children later in life. Realizing such associations between food taboos and maternal undernutrition which in turn has fatal consequences, this systematic review synthesized evidence on food taboos and their perceived reasons among pregnant women in Ethiopia.

METHODS

Search strategy: A comprehensive search was made from Pub-Med, Google Scholar, Google Scopus, and Medline databases. The search was done using search terms including “maternal dietary practice”, OR “harmful traditional practice on feeding” and “food taboos for pregnant women”, “Impact of food taboo” OR “feeding practice”. These search terms were set using search tables of the PICO (Population, Intervention/Exposure, Comparison, and Outcome) and PS (Population and Situation)

for quantitative and qualitative articles, respectively. Besides, reference lists of this systematic review included articles and reviews were also scanned for potential articles. The search was made from December 05, 2020 – December 29, 2021, and updated on January, 2022. All quantitative and qualitative studies published in English were included in the review.

Participant or population: All pregnant women participated in quantitative and/or qualitative primary research articles published related to food taboos, food prohibitions, and restrictions during pregnancy and perceived reasons were included. Otherwise, there was no exclusion based on age, ethnicity, or other characteristic.

Intervention: Not applicable.

Comparator: Not applicable.

Study designs to be included: All types of study designs were considered.

Eligibility criteria: Studies which were not in line with our objectives in terms of abstract, full text content, and duplicated articles were excluded.

Information sources: Studies were identified by searching electronic databases, scanning reference lists of articles, grey literature, and other non-bibliographic sources.

Main outcome(s): The main outcomes of this systematic review were the existence food taboos among pregnant women with varying features and for several perceived reasons.

Data management: Two authors performed the search activities independently. The first screening was based on a double-screening of titles and abstracts. Results which met explicit exclusion criteria were excluded. In the second step, the remaining articles were assessed for full-text reading. In case of disagreement among reviewers, a third reviewer assessed the study and a

decision for inclusion was reached by consensus.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis:

The studies were assessed using the criteria proposed check list called the Joanna Briggs institute (JBI) critical appraisal for systematic review tool for quality assessment. The parameters used were how the review questions were stated, appropriateness of the inclusion criteria, search strategy, source and resource used to search, criteria for appraising studies, number of authors conducted for appraisal, how errors were minimized in the data, method used to combine studies, assessing publication bias, supporting recommendation for policy /or practice, and use of specific directive approach for new research.

Strategy of data synthesis: The results of the systematic review was synthesized descriptively and presented under the themes.

Subgroup analysis: Not applicable.

Sensitivity analysis: Not applicable.

Country(ies) involved: Ethiopia.

Keywords: Food taboos; perceived reasons; pregnancy; Ethiopia.

Contributions of each author:

Author 1 - Hadush Gebregziabher - Author 1 conceptualized the study and drafted the manuscript.

Email: hadushgm@gmail.com

Author 2 - Amaha Kahsay - Author 2 designed the systematic review and performed the literature search, selection, analysis, writing and reviewing the manuscript.

Email: amahakahsay@gmail.com

Author 3 - Fereweni Gebrearegay - Author 3 designed the systematic review and performed the literature search, selection, analysis, writing and reviewing the manuscript.

Email: gebrearegayfereweni@gmail.com

Author 4 - Kidanemariam Berhe - Author 4 designed the systematic review and

performed the literature search, selection, analysis, writing and reviewing the manuscript.

Email: kidane0920@gmail.com

Author 5 - Alem Gebremariam - Author 5 designed the systematic review and performed the literature search, selection, analysis, writing and reviewing the manuscript.

Email: alemg25@gmail.com

Author 6 - Gebretsadkan Gebremedhin Gebretsadik - Author 6 designed the systematic review and performed the literature search, selection, analysis, writing and reviewing the manuscript.

Email: gere2023@gmail.com

Other relevant information: Our review protocol was not prospectively registered because of an internet blackout related to the Tigray war.