

**ASSOCIATION OF MATERNAL AUTONOMY AND INCIDENCE
OF ILLNESS WITH POST NEONATAL HEALTH SERVICE
UTILIZATION IN SOUTH CENTRAL TIMOR,
EAST NUSA TENGGARA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: The low level of health service utilization in infants may lead to post-neonatal high mortality rate. Previous studies have shown that maternal autonomy contributes to poor utilization of health service in children. This study aimed to determine the association of maternal autonomy and incidence of illness with post neonatal health service utilization in South Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara.

Subjects and Method: This was cross-sectional study conducted in South Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara. A sample of 280 post-neonatal mothers was selected by multistage random sampling. The dependent variable was post neonatal health service utilization. The independent variables were maternal autonomy and incidence of illness. The data was collected by questionnaire and analyzed by path analysis.

Results: Maternal autonomy ($b = 0.12$; 95% CI = 0.04 to 0.22; $p = 0.007$) and incidence of illness ($b = 0.81$; 95% CI = 0.74 to 0.86; $p < 0.001$) directly increased post-neonatal health service utilization. Maternal autonomy increased post-neonatal health service utilization by increasing incidence of illness.

Conclusion: The higher the maternal autonomy, the higher post neonatal health service utilization. Maternal autonomy needs to be improved through communication between husband and wife and by providing chances for women to work and generate income for the household.

Keywords: utilization, post-neonatal, autonomy, mother.

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