

**FORMAL EDUCATION LEVEL AND MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH CARE
PRACTICES IN KATIKAMU COUNTY, LUWEERO DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate formal education level and maternal child health care practices in Katikamu county, Luwero district. The research was guided by two (02) research objectives: to examine the relationship between formal education level and maternal child health care practices, and; to examine the relationship between social – economic environment and maternal child health care practices. The study adopted a cross-sectional design with both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to collect and analyse data. The research instruments were, a Self Administered Questionnaire (SAQ), Interview Guide and Document analysis. Data was obtained from 400 randomly selected mothers and other key informants from Buyuki and Sambwe parishes. The key informants included community leaders, health workers and primary seven girls from two schools in Katikamu County in particular Katikamu Sub County and Nyimbwa Sub County. The quantitative data collected was analysed using SPSS and Excel computer programmes. By using the Kruscal-Wallis test, the variable relationship findings were ($X=69.682$, $P=0.7$). The qualitative data was analyzed by content analysis in percentages as tabulated. The study found out that maternal formal education and child health care practices are significantly related in most aspects. Formal education enhances child health because it empowers mothers to be more able to care effectively for the child’s health. Most women have reduced the risk of disease in children through immunization and use of available medical facilities and proper use of medicine given. Mothers protect and nourish their children so as to grow up healthy and strong. Some unhealthy cultural practices such as eating in same dish, sharing cups, sharing cutting objects has been discarded among the educated to reduce child infections. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between formal education level and maternal child health care practices in Katikamu County. Women who had higher formal education such as tertiary and secondary level education exhibited better maternal child health care practices, such as hand washing before breastfeeding, house and compound cleaning, and visiting health centers for immediate treatment among others, compared to their counter parts who had attained only primary level. It was recommended that the National Curriculum Development Center and Uganda National Examination Board need to integrate the required child health care practices in curriculum and syllabi specifically to train child health care practices.