



## **Introduction**

Pregnancy is a normal process that results in a series of both physiological and psychological changes in expectant mothers. However, normal pregnancy may be accompanied by some problems and complications which are potentially life threatening to the mother and / or the fetus. (*Fraser et al, 2003*).

Globally, every minute, at least one woman dies from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth – that means 529 000 women a year. In addition, for every woman who dies in childbirth, around 20 more suffer injury, infection or disease – approximately 10 million women each year. (*WHO, 2005*).

Most maternal deaths are avoidable as the health care solutions to prevent or manage the complications are well known. This includes well functioning health system that provides accessible and high quality care from household to hospital level. Egyptian health officials have long been concerned about the country's preventable maternal deaths, with good reason. (*El-Zanaty et al, 2008*).

Both formal education and antenatal care had a significant impact on the results of child bearing. Education provides women with accurate information about themselves, and about ways to prevent and treat illness. In addition, it brings desirable changes in reproductive patterns, in the status of women, and in living standards. (*Harrison, 2009*).

Most women experience the normal discomforts that take place during pregnancy. However, sometimes there can be warning signs that need immediate medical attention such as vaginal bleeding , vaginal



discharge that is unusual , pain or burning in urination, persistent nausea or vomiting , severe persistent frequent headache , sharp pelvic pain or severe cramping , frequent dizzy spells or fainting , leakage of fluid from the vagina , visual disturbances , sudden swelling in hands feet and face , noticeable decrease or absence of fetal movement , high fever - over 100.4c° Fahrenheit orally , low back pain that comes and goes , contractions more often than four times an hour if gestational age is less than 37 weeks. (*Chen, 2005*).

Antenatal care is the key to modern obstetrics. In this context it had its origins at the beginning of this century. Antenatal care is now asophisticated branch of preventive medicine embracing the pre-symptomatic, diagnosis of general medical disorders, nutrition, immunology, health education and social medicine in addition to the preventing or early detection of abnormalities directly related to pregnancy. (*Brown, 2006*).

Antenatal care provides an opportunity to inform and educate pregnant women on a variety of issues related to pregnancy, birth and parenthood. Besides the benefits of identifying high-risk pregnancies and providing timely assessment and treatment, one of the expected utilities of antenatal care is the utilization of antenatal care services for gaining health knowledge and accessing other health services.( *Renkert S.,2009*).

The nurse plays an important role to improve the quality of antenatal care, which provides treatments and assessments ordered by the care provider. The nurse also teaches positive health practices in a way that is consistent with respectful of family's cultural practices. At the same time, the nurse can provide health promotional and psychological interventions with follow up. Nurses also share to achieve comprehensive services,



which include health and nutrition education, counseling, social services, and appropriate referral (*Greehan, 2001*).

Nurses play an important role in ensuring the safety of the patient and unborn child during all phases of pregnancy and delivery. Nurses must be knowledgeable about complications that can occur during pregnancy and ready to act on behalf of the patient and child. This is the responsibility and goal of the perinatal nurse. Most hospitals and birthing centers provide guideline for nurses providing care to women experiencing complications during pregnancy and nurses should always follow the recommendations of health facilities. (*Leifer, 2005*).

### **JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM:**

Women die from a wide range of complications in pregnancy, childbirth or the postpartum period. These life threatening complications are treatable, and thus most of these deaths are avoidable if women with the complications are able to identify and seek appropriate emergency obstetric care which makes a difference between life and death. (*WHO, 2009*).

Millions of women in the developing countries are unable to receive antenatal care for a variety of factors. This results in increasing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity rates. The world Health Organization has estimated that of the 600.000 maternal deaths per year from complications of pregnancy, almost 95% occur in the developing countries. (*WHO, 2001*). Most of pregnant mothers view disturbances that occur during pregnancy as normal events associated with child bearing process so this study was carried out to assess woman knowledge about warning signs during pregnancy as well as to study the effect of guideline about warning signs during pregnancy on woman.