

## **Abstract**

**Background:** Pregnancy is a distinct physiological state in which medication use presents both challenges and concerns due to altered drug pharmacokinetics. The awareness and perceptions regarding medication use can significantly impact the well-being of both the mother and the unborn child. In this study, we aimed to evaluate the awareness and perceptions of medication use during pregnancy and breastfeeding among Libyan women.

**Methodology:** This was a cross-sectional study, questionnaire-based study conducted between September 2024 and March 2025.

**Findings:** One hundred ninety-three women included in the final analysis. 82% were under the age of 45, and 98% had some level of education. Most of participants (84%) had experienced more than one pregnancy. About 53% reported taking medication at least once a week during pregnancy ( $p$ -value = 0.00). While 76% either agreed or somewhat agreed that all medications should be avoided during pregnancy, 28% acknowledged an increase in medication use during this period. Additionally, 72% believed that medications taken during pregnancy are more harmful than beneficial, and 98% stated that they follow prescribed treatments. Furthermore, 83% perceived medication use in early pregnancy as harmful or potentially harmful, while 62% viewed its use in late pregnancy as harmful or possibly harmful. However, women aged 26–45 and those with bachelor's degrees were more likely to believe herbal medicines are safe ( $p$ -values = 0.017 and 0.001, respectively), while postgraduate women disagreed with this view ( $p$ -value = 0.97). 54% declared used medication for heartburn or gastritis, 39% used antibiotics. 10% used Asthma/Allergy medications, which was significant in participants with public education and Bachelor ( $P$ -value=0.00, 0.03) respectively. The primary source of information for 93% of the

participants was physicians involved in antenatal care, while 23% also consulting pharmacists. Age and educational background were particularly linked to perceptions of safety. The findings highlight the need for increased educational efforts and the promotion of reliable sources of information regarding medication use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

**Keywords:** Pregnancy, Libyan Women, Medication Safety, Breastfeeding