

Maternal and Newborn Health Care Program Implementation and Integration by Maternal Community Health Workers, Africa: An Integrative Review

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Abstract : Background: Community health workers and extension workers can play an important role in supporting families to adopt health practices, encourage delivery in a health care facility, and ensure time referral of mothers and newborns if needed. Saving the lives of neonates should, therefore, be a significant health outcome in any maternal and newborn health program that is being implemented. Furthermore, about half of a million mothers die from pregnancy-related causes. Maternal and newborn deaths related to the period of postnatal care are neglected. Some authors emphasized that in developing countries, newborn mortality rates have been reduced much more slowly because of the lack of many necessary facility-based and outreach service. The aim of this review was to critically analyze the implementation and integration process of the maternal and newborn health care program by maternal community health workers, into the health care system, in Africa. Furthermore, it aims to reduce maternal and newborn mortality. We addressed the following review question: (1) what process is involved in the implementation and integration of the maternal and newborn health care program by maternal community health workers during antenatal, delivery and postnatal care into health system care in Africa? Methods: The database searched was from Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition through academic search complete via EBSCO Host. An iterative approach was used to go through Google scholarly papers. The reviewers considered adapted Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidance, and the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used. Synthesis method in integrative review following elements of noting patterns and themes, seeing plausibility, clustering, counting, making contrasts and comparisons, discerning commons and unusual patterns, subsuming particulars into general, noting relations between variability, finding intervening factors and building a logical chain of evidence, using data-based convergent synthesis design. Results: From the seventeen of studies included, results focused on three dimensions inspired by the literature on antenatal, delivery, and postnatal interventions. From this, further conceptual framework was elaborated. The conceptual framework process of implementation and integration of maternal and newborn health care program by maternal community health workers was elaborated in order to ensure the sustainability of community based intervention. Conclusions: the review revealed that the implementation and integration of maternal and newborn health care program require planning. We call upon governments, non-government organizations, the global health community, all stakeholders including policy makers, program managers, evaluators, educators, and providers to be involved in implementation and integration of maternal and newborn health program in updated policy and community-based intervention. Furthermore, emphasis should be placed on competence, responsibility, and accountability of maternal community health workers, their training and payment, collaboration with health professionals in health facilities, and reinforcement of outreach service. However, the review was limited in focus to the African context, where the process of maternal and newborn health care program has been poorly implemented.

Keywords : Africa, implementation of integration, maternal, newborn

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