

Assessing the Quality of Maternity Care in Sub-Saharan Africa Using the Donabedian Quality of Care Framework: A Systematic Scoping Review

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Abstract : Background: Maternal mortality and morbidity are global concerns, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Most maternal mortalities occur at the time of birth. Quality intrapartum care is essential for improving maternal and newborn health outcomes. This scoping review aimed to assess and describe the quality of care during childbirth in SSA to provide an overview of the regional trend of the quality of intrapartum care, the challenges to quality care provision, and identify research gaps. Methods: A scoping review based on Arksey and O'Malley's scoping review framework was conducted. Medline, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and maternal-infant databases were searched to identify the relevant studies for this review. A narrative summary was presented using themes based on the Donabedian structure, process, and outcome quality of care model. Results: A total of five hundred and forty-seven (547) publications were identified. Fifty-six (56) studies conducted in twenty (20) countries were included in the review. Thirty-four (34) were quantitative, sixteen (16) were qualitative, and six (6) were mixed methods. Most of the studies were related to the process component of quality of care. The provision of emergency obstetric care services, infrastructure, and availability of essential staff and equipment for perinatal care was inadequate in many facilities, particularly rural and peripheral health facilities. Many women experienced disrespectful care during childbirth. Routine care during labour and delivery was observed to be sub-optimal, yet some women reported high satisfaction with care. The use of health facilities for delivery was lower in health centres compared to hospitals. Conclusion: There are variations in the quality of maternity care provided in SSA. Intrapartum care quality is generally deficient in SSA, particularly in peripheral health facilities, health centres, and community clinics. Many of the quality-of-care issues identified are related to the structure component. Stakeholders must develop interventions that comprehensively address these interrelated issues to improve maternal healthcare quality, especially in primary healthcare facilities.

Keywords : quality of care, maternity health, Sub-Saharan Africa, intrapartum

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