

Why Recommendations and Responses are So Important in a Maternal and Perinatal Deaths Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) Process?

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Introduction

In the last decade, some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have made progress in reducing maternal and perinatal deaths, but the rate of mortality is still high. All governments have made the commitment to improve maternal and child indicators, seeking alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. It is admitted that adequate information on the causes and circumstances of maternal and perinatal deaths is the indispensable element to make efforts to prevent future deaths. However, that implies having a robust surveillance and response system that identifies all adverse events in real time and helps to understand the underlying factors that contribute to these deaths and encourages the application of immediate actions to prevent future deaths [1].

Discussion

MPDSR is an intervention that allows to assess the causes and preventability of deaths. But its main purpose is, absolutely, to identify solutions to gaps in the management of the case(s) under consideration. The problem is that in some settings, one of the most challenging parts of the review process is the formulation of appropriate recommendations [2]. These are assumed to be the only mechanism of action for MPDSR [1]. Solutions should always be specific, measurable, appropriate, relevant and time-bound. Responsibility for tracking the progress of each solution should be assigned to specific individuals so that the findings from death reviews should lead to immediate actions to prevent similar deaths, especially those at health facilities. The gaps should be addressed at the point of care, especially those that require the action of other more distal stakeholders [3]. With the correct processes in place for sharing information, deaths that have a modifiable factor linked to the community or the referral pathway may lead to actions. That is why recommendations and appropriate responses are so important. Otherwise, significant results can't be achieved and demotivation occurs [4].

Conclusion

Directing efforts to close the observed gaps could be important in addressing the MPDSR audit process. Most examples of effective responses were targeted actions implemented in individual facilities. Therefore, at all levels the committees must be well structured with motivated staff and have the capacity to deal with all issues related to maternal and perinatal deaths. In my opinion, reducing and if possible minimizing maternal and perinatal deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa should be a top priority.

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