

TYPES AND SEVERITY OF NEURAL TUBE DEFECTS AMONG NEONATES ADMITTED AT MUHIMBILI NATIONAL HOSPITAL, DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Congenital disabilities represent 13.2% of all mortality rates in Tanzania, with neural tube defects being the most common and significantly contributing to the morbidity and mortality of neonates. In Tanzania, effective interventions such as folic acid supplementation and folic acid fortification of food staples have been done in the country since 2013, Since then, the trend including types of NTDs have not been studied.

Material and methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among neonates admitted at the Neonatal Unit at MNH. All eligible neonate-mother pairs were enrolled consecutively until the desired sample size was attained. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were analyzed and presented using frequencies and percentages.

Results: Sixty neonates with NTDs were enrolled in the study. Most of them 96.7% had spina bifida, while a small proportion 3.3% had encephalocele, but no cases of anencephaly were found. Furthermore, 65% of the neonates had severe forms of neural tube defects.

Conclusions: The study found the common type of neural tube defect was spina bifida, followed by encephalocele. Among the spina bifida detected, the common type was meningoceles. The severe form was found in myelomeningoceles.

Recommendations: Further studies, with a large sample size and prospective follow up design should be carried out to determine the outcomes together with the quality of life among children with NTDs.