

# LOW BIRTH WEIGHT: RISK FACTORS AND EARLY NEONATAL OUTCOME IN THREE REGIONAL HOSPITALS OF DAR ES SALAAM.

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## ABSTRACT

### Background.

Low birth weight is a leading cause of neonatal morbidity and mortality due to its complications. There are multiple causes of LEW including low social economic status, maternal malnutrition and maternal diseases, short birth intervals, maternal age etc. The purpose of this study was to determine risks factors contributing to low birth weight babies and early neonatal outcome in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

**General objectives.** The general objective of this study was to determine prevalence of Low birth weight, risk factors and early neonatal outcome in the three regional hospitals of Dar es Salaam.

**Specific objectives.** Specific objectives were to determine prevalence of low birth weight babies, to determine maternal risk factors related to low birth weight, to establish common early (first 7 days of life) health problems association with low birth weight babies and to find out the death rate of low birth weight infants.

**Methodology.** This was a prospective cross-sectional descriptive hospital based study conducted in three neonatal units of Mwananyamala, Amana and Temeke) regional hospitals. The study involved 350 low birth weight neonates and their mothers who were admitted in the neonatal units during the six months period of this study. A purposeful sampling technique was conducted whereby all neonates who satisfied the inclusion criteria and whose parents/guardian granted written informed consent were enrolled into the study. Data analysis was performed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0.

**Results.** The study established that, LEW has a strong association with several risk factors including: premature rupture of membrane, low EMI, previous history of preterm labour, maternal anaemia, maternal age, and poor antenatal care. Low birth weight

neonates were found to have various adverse outcomes such as hypoglycemia, birth asphyxia, anaemia, neonatal sepsis, congenital anomalies and neonatal jaundice. Female babies born with LBW were more in numbers compared to male babies. Birth asphyxia, Neonatal sepsis, Preterm and hypoglycemia were leading causes of death in LBW babies.

**Conclusions and Recommendations.** LBW is a significant public health problem and root causes are fairly complex. Every Newborn action Plan has pointed the important aspects that need to be addressed to tackle this problem. Such areas include: Strengthening and investing in care during labour, birth and the first day and week of life. Improve the quality of maternal and newborn care. Reach every woman and newborn to reduce inequities. Harness the power of parents, families, and communities. Count every newborn through measurement, programme-tracking and accountability.