

A baseline mixed-methods study on postpartum care among health professionals in Tanzania

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Abstract

Background:

Globally, postpartum care (PPC) is a neglected part of maternal and neonatal health, despite 50% of maternal deaths occurring in the first weeks after childbirth.

Aim:

The study aimed to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices among providers of PPC in government institutions in two low-resource suburbs of Dar es Salaam: Ilala and Temeke.

Methods:

Health professionals ($n=149$) at all levels of care completed a knowledge and attitudes questionnaire. A checklist was used to observe 25 health professionals at reproductive and child health units, and 38 mothers were interviewed on exit. χ^2 - and logistic regression tests were used to analyse the outcomes. Field notes were analysed qualitatively.

Findings:

Overall, 64% of health professionals had high knowledge and most had positive attitudes towards PPC. Level of education was found to be positively associated with positive attitudes towards PPC (OR=2.5 CI 95% 1.03–6.13). PPC consultations with mothers and newborns during the first week after childbirth were found to be few or nonexistent. Mothers who came with newborns for BCG immunisation were mostly satisfied with the services.

Conclusion:

Quality improvement is required at the structure and process levels of the health system in order to provide holistic PPC consultations.