The prevalence and risk factors associated with neonatal hypothermia in regional referral hospitals in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

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Abstract:

Background:

Neonatal hypothermia is so common worldwide, especially in developing countries. It is one of the contributors to neonatal morbidity and mortality. Objective: To determine the prevalence and risk factors associated with neonatal hypothermia in Regional Referral Hospitals in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Methods:

It is a hospital-based descriptive cross-sectional study that was conducted at Mwananyamala and Temeke Regional Referral Hospitals in Dar es Salaam. The study involved pregnant women, newborns and health care providers. Neonatal hypothermia was regarded as dependent variable and the ten steps of WHO recommended Thermal protection as independent variables. The primary data were collected from antenatal, labour, and postnatal wards from March to May 2021. A total of 270 mother-newborn pairs and 41 health care providers were enrolled. Binary logistic regression with a p-value of 5% and 95% CI were applied, and the SPSS version 25 was used to analyze the data.

Results:

The study finds that; the overall prevalence of neonatal hypothermia is 25.6%. There is a significant association between lack of skin-to-skin contact, weighing and bathing postponed and the occurrence of hypothermia. The assessment shows inadequate knowledge and practice of WHO-recommended thermal protection guidelines among health care providers and pregnant women. Conclusions: The prevalence of neonatal hypothermia in this study was 25.6%. Lack of skin to skin contact of newborn babies and their mothers as well as inappropriate time of weighing the newborn babies contributed to the occurrence of neonatal hypothermia. There was inadequate knowledge of WHO thermal protection guideline among health care providers and pregnant women who had delivered during the study period and the most mentioned challenge on adherence to WHO recommended thermal protection is lack of radiant warmer. Recommendations:

The findings of this study will be shared with hospital administrators to develop strategies for health care workers who are delivering babies to be equipped with knowledge and practice of the WHO thermal protection guideline by providing regular refresher training and continuous medical education. It is also recommended to raise awareness of WHO thermal protection of the newborn among pregnant women attending antenatal care by regular health education sessions especially during the visit to antenatal clinics at during discharge after delivery.