



Maternal Mortality Among African American Women

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INTRODUCTION: MATERNAL MORTALITY

- Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.²
- Maternal mortality in the United States is a significant public health issue.
- Although the United States spends more on healthcare than any other country in the world, more than two women die during childbirth every day, making maternal mortality in the United States the highest when compared to other industrialized nations.¹
- Between 2000 and 2014, there was a 26% increase in the maternal mortality rate.³
- African American women have the highest prevalence of maternal mortality in the United States, as they are three to four times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related complication than non-Hispanic white women.³

DATA FINDINGS

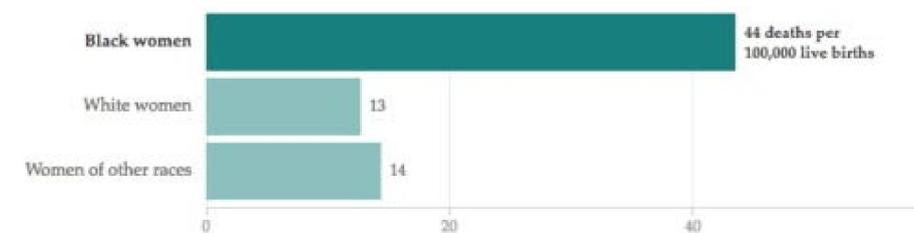
- To date, much of the literature on maternal mortality focuses on understanding the medical causes behind death.
- However, there are no studies that explore how the social determinants of health impact maternal mortality among African American women.
- Therefore, there is a need to investigate how overt and covert racism, discrimination, trauma, and institutional oppression are affecting the daily experiences of black pregnant women, thus potentially increasing maternal mortality rates.

HEALTH DISPARITY

- Racial disparities in maternal mortality are staggering.

Black women face significantly higher maternal mortality risk

Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (2011-2013)

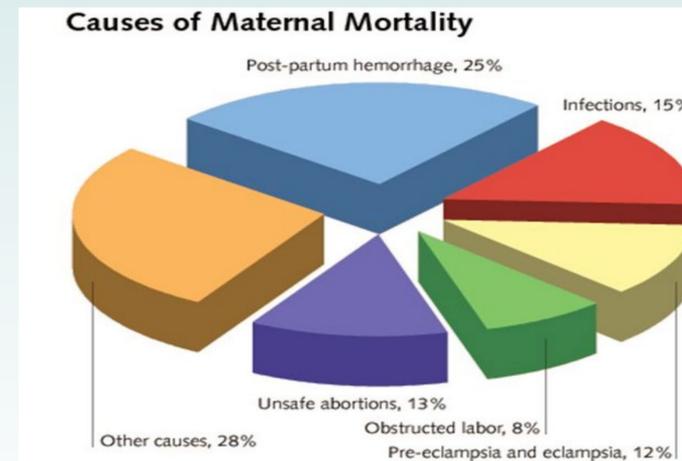


SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
PHOTO: ALAN HARRIS/ISTOCK

CAUSES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY

The major complications that account for nearly 75% of all maternal deaths are :

- severe bleeding (mostly bleeding after childbirth)
- infections (usually after childbirth)
- high blood pressure during pregnancy (pre-eclampsia and eclampsia)
- complications from delivery
- unsafe abortion.



OBJECTIVE: ADDRESS HEALTH DISPARITY

An in-depth understanding of these issues can provide tailored and practical ways to address this problem among African American women. Using critical race theory, as a theoretical framework may prove applicable, as well as an understanding of epigenetics.

RESEARCH INTEREST

- How does the role of racism/discrimination impact maternal mortality rates for minority women?
- How are risk factors such as poor nutrition, uncontrolled stress, obesity, and hypertension associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes among African American women?
- Do any associations between adverse pregnancy outcomes and risk factors low socio-economic status and stress differ between black women and women of other ethnic groups, i.e. Caucasian, Korean, Native American?

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POSTER DISCLOSURE

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