

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Are Process Indicators Adequate to Assess Essential Obstetric Care at District Level? — A Case Study from Rufiji District, Tanzania

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Abstract

To assess coverage and quality of essential obstetric care (EOC) and the appropriateness of using process indicators, a 3-month follow-up study was done in Rufiji district, Tanzania, involving 2 hospitals, 4 health centres, 10 large dispensaries and 10 randomly selected small dispensaries. Data collection was done on process indicators as suggested by UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA (UN) and unmet obstetric need (UON) for major obstetric intervention (MOI). With standard values in (brackets), the district had two comprehensive EOC facilities, births in EOC amounted to 62% (15%), met need for EOC was 76% (100%), caesarean section (C/S) rate 4.1% (>5%), hospital case fatality rate (CFR) 1.0% (<1%) and successful obstetric referrals 46% (100%). MOI for absolute maternal indication in the district was 2.6% (1-2%). All four maternal deaths occurred due to transport failures. The process indicators gave contradictory impressions on the coverage and quality of care and failed to link to the outcome of delivery complications in the study. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2005; 9[3]:100-111)

Keywords: *Quality of obstetric care, met needs, process indicators, program evaluation, Africa.*

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