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Prevalence and determinants of maternal mortality in referral hospitals in Nigeria: A multi-centre study

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The study was designed to determine the maternal mortality ratios (MMR) and identify the risk factors for maternal deaths in eight referral hospitals in four out of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. A pre-tested study protocol was used to obtain retrospective clinical data on pregnancies, births and maternal deaths in the hospitals over a six month period. Data were collected from six general hospitals (four in the south and two in the north), and two teaching hospitals (both in the northern part) of the country. Data were analyzed centrally using univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses. The results showed a mean MMR of 2085 per 100,000 live births in the hospitals (range: 877–4,210 per 100,000 births). Several covariates were identified as increasing the odds for maternal mortality; however, after adjustment for confounding, six factors remained significant in the logistic regression model. These include delivery in a secondary health facility as opposed to delivery in a tertiary hospital, non-booking for antenatal and delivery care, referral as obstetric emergency from non-hospital sources of care, previous experience by women of early pregnancy complications, and grand multiparity. We recommend that efforts to reduce MMR in referral hospitals in Nigeria should include the improvement of emergency obstetric care in secondary care facilities, public health education so that women can seek appropriate and immediate evidence-based pregnancy care, the socio-economic empowerment of women, and the strengthening of the health care system.

Biography

Friday E. Okonofua is a professor of obstetrics and gynaecology. He is currently serving as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Medical Sciences, Ondo State, Nigeria. Professor Okonofua has published more than 240 journal articles in women's health and obtained up to 50 international research grants. He is the founder of the Women's Health and Action Research Centre, one of Nigeria's leading NGOs, and the founding editor of the African Journal of Reproductive Health. He is a member of the editorial board of the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and several international journals and non-profit organizations..

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