

Health care seeking for seriously ill newborns among families in a state in India

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Abstract

Low cost, high impact focussed interventions have been identified to improve neonatal survival. This paper assesses the health seeking for sick newborns who were declared seriously ill immediately after their birth and the constraints faced by the families to access care. The study was done as a social autopsy of a sample of 382 neonatal deaths which occurred during a calendar year (January- December 2017) in four districts of a state in India. Using a semi structured social autopsy tool, information on the final illness of the newborn was collected from the principal care taker.

It was seen that 75% of the total sample of newborns (287/382), 60% of them males, were recognized to be seriously ill at or immediately after birth; 39% of them (113/287) died in the hospitals they were born or reached after delivering out of hospital. Majority were early neonatal deaths, pre term and had low birth weight. Three quarters of them could not be breastfed. The most common reasons for referral to higher facilities were need for specialized care or lack of equipment or drugs or oxygen administration facilities or blood transfusion facilities. Treatment was delayed for many newborns due to time taken in reaching the referral facilities. Families had to bear high out of pocket expenditure and had to overcome challenges of cost among others. It is imperative that intensive care facilities for newborns is strengthened at secondary and tertiary levels of care, also ensuring availability of drugs and equipment.



Biography:

Dr. Preetha G S, MD is an Associate Professor in International Institute of Health Management Research. She teaches Epidemiology, Research Methodology and Health Systems to the students of MBA Health Management. Her interest areas are non communicable diseases and perinatal/neonatal survival. She has led and been part of many research projects in public health. She has developed many research reports, case studies and scientific publications. The latest scientific publication was for the evaluation of Tobacco Cessation programme of Government of India (Preetha Gopinathan, et al. Self-reported quit rates and quit attempts among subscribers of a mobile text messaging-based tobacco cessation programme in India. *BMJ Innovations* Oct 2018, 4 (4) 147-154; DOI: 10.1136/bmjinnov-2018)



Speaker Publications:

1. "Health promotion: An effective tool for global health"; *Indian J Community Med* 2012;37:5-12
2. "Zoonotic diseases in India"; *Indian J Community Med* 2020;45, Suppl S1:1-2

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