

CE Proposal Option 2: Journal Article

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Title: What's in a name?: Do maternal death audits tell us what we need to know?

Target Journal: International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology (open access section)

I. Objective:

In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO), published *Beyond the Numbers: Reviewing maternal deaths and complications to make pregnancy safer*. The publication summarizes 5 methods for evaluating health care systems to understand the reasons why maternal deaths occur and how information gathered from a method can be used to prevent maternal deaths. Additionally, there are 6 other methods used. The aim of the journal article will be to understand and report on what each method measures, the questions it can answer, and whether it facilitates efforts to reduce maternal mortality. Additionally, we have several questions regarding these methods: Are the methods being used appropriately? Are investigators choosing the appropriate method for the questions they are asking? Is it necessary to have so many different methods or could some be combined? And finally, how often should a maternal death review be performed?

II. Significance/Rationale:

Millennium Development Goal number 5 is to decrease the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 75% in 2015 ("UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/2: United Nations Millennium Declaration - UNISDR," 2000). In order to reach this goal, MMR needs to decline by 5.5% annually ("WHO | World Health Statistics 2011," 2011). According to Hill et al., MMR decreased by an annual, average rate of 2.5% per year between 1990 and 2005; a rate limited to middle-income countries (Hill et al., 2006). Countries in Northern Africa, Asia, and Latin America had an annual decrease of only 1%, while countries with high maternal mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa had essentially no improvement at all (Hill et al., 2006). Although, these numbers help us set targets, they tell us little about why women are continuing to die from pregnancy-related causes and why attempts to reduce the number of pregnancy-related deaths has been slow for some regions of the world. The journal article will investigate the role maternal death audits play in reducing maternal mortality.

III. Data Source/Evidence Base:

I will use a literature review of maternal death audits to answer our questions. I will also use a table that I created with Professor Maine last semester that helped us understand the different methods of maternal death audit.

IV. Working Outline: (as detailed as possible)

1. Introduction:
Why we decided to explore the different methods
 - i. understand terminology, clarify what the different methods are used for and how they are used in the field
 - ii. A list of methods used and their definition
2. Methods:
How we conducted our review of the literature: key words, criteria on how we chose an article
3. Findings:
Are the approaches being used appropriately? Or “Are investigators choosing the right approach?”
 - a. Here we can use the table to evaluate the articles reviewed (this may be easier if we choose articles that actually conducted and reported outcomes based on using one of these methods, excluding articles that only reviewed a method)
 - a. Example: WHO, Beyond the Numbers
 - i. A facility based maternal death review – investigation of causes and circumstances surrounding maternal death that occur in health care facilities
 1. Includes collecting information in the community
 - a. Why not instead use verbal autopsy, social autopsy, or community-based review?
4. Discussion:
 - A. Choosing an inappropriate approach can lead to unclear reporting. By definition each method answers certain questions about maternal death
 - i. Facility-based death review and Clinical audit
 1. Investigation of causes and circumstances surrounding maternal deaths occurring at health facility
 - a. Some studies only investigate obstetric-related deaths or women admitted to the hospital for delivery (not all women admitted to the facility)
 - B. Should the method be used as an approach or a tool within an investigation?
 - a. Verbal autopsy is often used as a tool as opposed to an approach
 - C. Are the lessons learned translated into action?
 - a. Which reviews reflect maternal mortality?
 - b. If review is a surveillance tool of clinical practice, it may be useful, but should it be used to determine causes of death in a population if causes are already known? Would it be better to act now and review later?
 - c. Most studies only focus on negative outcomes, what about the need to study positive outcomes (there is one study) in order to replicate?
 - d. Using information: page 37 of beyond the numbers

V. Work Plan for Submitting Drafts:

Draft 1 October 14

- i. Meet with Professor Maine to review project
- ii. September 19 Finish Lit Review
- iii. September 26 Intro of Journal Article written
- iv. TBA: Schedule meeting to clarify any outstanding questions
- v. October 3 Body of Paper written
- vi. October 11 Discussion and Conclusion written

Draft 2 November 11

- vii. October 21: Receive Feedback on Draft 1 from Professor Maine
- viii. TBA: Schedule meeting to clarify any outstanding questions
- ix. October 28 Feedback from Professor Maine reviewed and further research completed if necessary
- x. November 4: Changes to draft based on feedback will be finalized

Draft 3 December 2

- xi. November 18 Receive Feedback on Draft 2 from Professor Maine
- xii. TBA: Schedule meeting to clarify any outstanding questions
- xiii. November 28 Feedback from Professor Maine reviewed and further research completed if necessary
- xiv. November 30 Changes to draft based on feedback will be finalized

Final Draft December 20

- xv. December 9 Receive Feedback on Draft 2 from Professor Maine
- xvi. December 12 Feedback from Professor Maine reviewed and further research completed if necessary
- xvii. TBA: Schedule meeting to clarify any outstanding questions
- xviii. December 16 Changes to draft based on feedback will be finalized

VI. Working Bibliography: (approximately 15 to start with)

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