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| Topics: Stillbirth |
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| **Counting intrapartum Stillbirths worldwide - current status and measurement improvement agenda** |
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| **Introduction** Intrapartum stillbirths (deaths occurring after the onset of labour but before birth) reflect the care received by mothers and their babies during labour. As a result, intrapartum stillbirth rate has been proposed as an indicator for tracking the quality of obstetric monitoring and healthcare. A paucity of data regarding intrapartum stillbirths at facility, program and national levels has limited previous worldwide, regional and national intrapartum stillbirth estimates.  **Material and Methods** Data on intrapartum stillbirths were identified through web-based searches of National Statistical Office and Ministry of Health websites, and systematic literature searches. Data were assessed from all available sources including Vital Registration, national registries, health management information systems, surveys and facility and population-based studies. A Stillbirth Epidemiology Investigator Group was created with calls for data distributed via relevant groups and individual principal investigators. Global intrapartum stillbirth rates were estimated based on available data.  **Results** Data were located for 74 countries across all geographical regions. 173 data points covering over 37 million births with 1.1 million stillbirths from 65 countries met the criteria for inclusion. The quantity and quality of data was subject to marked regional variation, with the weakest data from low income regions with high stillbirth rates. No data were available for 130 countries. Multiple approaches to fit a regression model to predict intrapartum stillbirths were attempted, however it was not possible to fit a satisfactory model. Therefore, for countries without recent high quality national data, we estimated the number of intrapartum stillbirths by multiplying the regional proportion of all stillbirths (≥28 weeks) that are intrapartum by the overall estimated number of stillbirths ≥28 weeks in 2015.  **Conclusions** Despite two-thirds of births worldwide being in health facilities there were an estimated 1.3 million intrapartum stillbirths (≥28 weeks) worldwide in 2015. The vast majority of these are preventable. Whilst overall stillbirth rate data have increased over the past decade, data on timing of stillbirths (antepartum or intrapartum) are still lacking for the majority of countries. Recording all facility births, including stillbirths with timing of death (intrapartum/ antepartum) using standard definitions is feasible. However, despite being recorded in most routine labour ward registries they are infrequently collated in national information systems, even in High Income countries.  Improved recording and collating of these data in all countries is needed to enable improved tracking of the quality of obstetric care received for women and their babies worldwide. |
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