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| **Where is the baby in the respectful childbirth agenda?  A preliminary study on global disrespectful care of newborns, stillbirths and families** |
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| **Introduction** In September 2014, the WHO released a statement on the prevention and elimination of disrespectful and abusive care during childbirth. This is a necessary step to ensuring respectful maternity care; yet most of this focus has been on mothers.  This presentation is a preliminary investigation into the burden of disrespectful care of newborn infants, including those who do not survive pregnancy and delivery. The presentation will begin with explanation of the WHO statement and the Universal Charter on the Rights of Childbearing Women, highlight where newborns and stillbirth bereavement care have been overlooked, review the extant literature on disrespectful care, and then present preliminary data on the prevalence of disrespectful and neglectful care of newborns.  **Material and Methods** This preliminary study utilized two methods: (1) A literature review was conducted to explore the extant documentation on disrespectful care for newborns in both high- and low- resource settings; (2) Secondary data analyses were conducted on data from Uganda, Zambia and Mexico, where previous evaluations of maternal health care projects included interviews (N=74) and focus groups (N=48) with recently-delivered women about their childbirth and neonatal care experiences. Themes around newborn care, including disrespectful and abusive care, were coded and analysed by thematic content.  **Results** From the literature review, we find that respectful care for newborns has been lacking across the continuum of care: for mothers, stillborn infants, and all newborns, including those born preterm and those who die in infancy. Two recent systematic reviews have covered treatment of women (but not newborns) during childbirth, and patients’ perspectives on needs after a stillbirth (but only in high-income countries). Across countries, health systems are often not prepared to handle critically-ill newborns and few hospitals have sensitive policies with a range of options for palliation, burials or grieving. In the studies examined in Uganda and Zambia, there were predominantly cases of threats from facilities to deny or delay postnatal care for newborns due to having been born at home. In Uganda some women reported outright refusal of care; in Zambia, some women were given lower priority for postnatal care or asked to pay extra due to having a home delivery. In Mexico, there were more cases of maternal-infant separation without consent reported, but fewer accounts of denial of postnatal care. Across countries, women and their newborns experienced discrimination if they were of a lower economic class or were a member of an ethnic or linguistic minority group.  **Conclusions** Respectful care for newborns is a neglected, but necessary, issue to address in global health. We need to document cases of neglect and abuse across the globe, and to include newborns and stillborn infants in the respectful maternity care agenda and post-2015 global reproductive care frameworks. |
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