

Respectful and non-abusive care during childbirth in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: a case from Saint Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College (SPHMMC) and three Catchment Health Centers

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Background: Lack of respectful and non-abusive care at birth may encompass many points along a continuum that spans dignified, patient centered care, non-dignified care, and overtly abusive maternal care. Poor quality of service is one among the various reasons for not giving birth at health institutions

Methodology: A facility based study was conducted in August 2013 to quantitatively assess the prevalence of disrespect and abuse (D&A) during childbirth in the study area using 28 verification criteria. A total of 173 mothers who gave birth at the study institutions and 57 service providers were interviewed. Data were collected using a structured and pre-tested questionnaire by female data collectors and SPSS version 16 was used for analysis.

Results: Disrespect and abuse was identified to be practiced in 96.5% (at least one report among the 28 criteria) of the deliveries surveyed. Failure to maintain women's right to information, lack of informed consent, and failure to maintain choice/preferences; all forming a single indicator, were the common problems reported by 95.4% of clients followed by leaving mothers without attention (39.3%). Though the level of practice of D&A was found to be very high, only 12.7% of mother claimed to have been disrespected and abused during childbirth, which shows that there is normalization of D&A in the study area. Mothers who delivered at hospitals were more likely to be left without attention (AOR=2.08, 95%CI: 2.08, 33.2). Besides, 77.2% of providers reported that disrespecting mothers based on any specific attribute was practiced in the three months preceding the survey.

Conclusions: Disrespect and abuse was highly practiced by service providers and normalized by clients. Further studies need to explore why D&A is normalized. Thus, we recommend a concerted effort to increase the awareness of service providers on D&A to help them provide women friendly services during childbirth.

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