Respectful Maternity Care – (RMC)

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ABSTRACT

Pregnant women's calls for respectful maternity care were introduced as the Government of India was designing a strong new program—the Labour Room and Quality Improvement Initiative (LaQshya). White Ribbon Alliance India shared campaign findings and supported the Government in incorporating Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) into the LaQshya guidelines. So RMC became part of LaQshya. In December 2017, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare launched LaQshya, an initiative aimed at reducing maternal deaths, improving the quality of care in labour rooms, and strengthening a positive birthing experience by ensuring RMC for all pregnant women attending public health institutions.

Promoting respectful maternity care is a basic strategy for ensuring institutional birth, which significantly reduces maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity.

Respectful maternity care is a rightful expectation of women. However, disrespectful maternity care is prevalent in various settings. Every woman has the right to:

- Freedom from harm and ill treatment
- Information, the right to provide informed consent and refusal to consent, and respect for choices and preferences, including companionship during maternity care
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Dignity and respect
- Equality, freedom from discrimination and access to equitable care
- Healthcare and the highest attainable level of health
- Liberty, autonomy and self-determination

Key Words-RMC, labour room, LaQshya, equitable care, maternity care, newborn

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, Respectful maternity care (RMC) –refers to care organized for and provided to all women in a manner that maintains their dignity, privacy and confidentiality, ensures freedom from harm and mistreatment, and enables informed choice and continuous support during labour and childbirth – is recommended.

Human beings, by virtue of their being human possess some inherent, universal and inalienable rights not inclusive to particular ethnicity, nationality, social class and sex. It sets basic standards without which anyone

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can't live in dignity. Rights and dignity are both interdependent and interrelated. Pregnant women are no exception in this regard.

In every country and community worldwide, pregnancy and childbirth are important and special events in the lives of women and their families, and a period of crisis also.

Unfortunately, many women's experience of care does not match this image, especially in developing country-es including India. In contrast to pregnant women's demands, there are incidents including conducting procedures or examinations without consent, depriving women of privacy, conducting procedures that are not medically indicated, not allowing women to choose their birthing position, directing abusive language at the pregnant woman, slapping or hitting, placing multiple women in a bed, discrimination, not sharing findings of examinations with women and their relatives.

Background related to experience of respectful maternity care in hospital

According to White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI) is an important issue for a country like India where 45,000 women die in pregnancy and childbirth each year, accounting for 17% of all maternal deaths worldwide. Respectful Maternity Care ensures quality care and preserves women's autonomy, dignity, feelings, choices, and preferences during childbirth. Maternity caregivers can empower and comfort pregnant women, or inflict lasting damage and emotional trauma. Evidence suggests that in countries with high maternal mortality like India, the fear of disrespect and abuse that women often encounter in facility-based maternity care is a more powerful deterrent to the use of skilled care than commonly recognized barriers such as cost or distance.

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive review of multiple databases was conducted systematically. Various qualitative and quantitative studies were included in Scoping review evaluating the women perception regarding RMC and health workers' perspectives about RMC. PubMed, Google scholar, Research gate, CINAHL and white ribbon respectful maternity care repository portal were used to find studies already done in this field of maternity care.

DISCUSSION

- Women who delivered in daytime were 2.46 times more likely to experience respectful care than those who delivered at night time.
- The highest reported forms of ill-treatment are not taking consent for performing any procedures, verbal abuse, threats, physical abuse, and discrimination.
- Other factors include lack of dignity, lack of privacy, demand for informal payments by nonprofessional health care providers, and lack of basic infrastructure, hygiene, and sanitation. The determinants identified for disrespect and abuse were sociocultural factors including age, socioeconomic status, caste, parity, women's autonomy, empowerment, comorbidity, and environmental factors including infrastructural issues, overcrowding, ill-equipped health facilities, supply constraints, and healthcare access.
- The birth outcome is better when the mother receives quality care. It is essential to create awareness among the mothers regarding respectful maternity care.
- It is essential to address factors such as workload on health care providers and infrastructure at the hospitals so that women get access to good quality care. This can be achieved by regular monitoring and supervision, feedback from postnatal mothers during discharge and team coordination. Delivering respectful maternity care is depends on many factors, and it is essential to address all the issues and not just focus on any one.

- A systematic review has identified the pooled prevalence in India to be 71.31%. The prevalence reported in community-based studies was 77.32%, and in hospital-based studies it was 65.38%. Studies have shown the prevalence of ill-treatment, disrespect and abuse at various settings including the public sector, private sector and high- and low-income settings in India.

CONCLUSION

- Provision of respectful maternity care (RMC) is in accordance with a human rights-based approach to reducing maternal morbidity and mortality. RMC could improve women's experience of labour and childbirth and address health inequalities.

- There is limited evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to promote RMC or to reduce ill treatment of pregnant women during labour and childbirth.

- Effective communication and engagement in quality care among health care professionals is necessary to provide respectful maternity care.

- Interventions should aim to ensure a respectful and dignified working environment for those providing care.

- Health care providers have the responsibility to provide quality care to pregnant women, which can be ensured by not violating the rights of the pregnant woman. Findings from the study can be utilized to improve the quality of care by adhering to RMC.

- The administrator has the responsibility for policy formulation, constructing rules regulation to ensure pregnant women's rights and strict supervision. Findings of the study can help to address the areas that need more improvement.

- Awareness of nursing personnel is needed regarding the rights and dignity of pregnant women. Findings of this study can be utilized to sensitize the nursing personnel from the very beginning of their preparation period.

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