Obstetric-Related Racial Health Disparities

Jamie Turner-Rose
Nancy Petges, Ed.D., MSN, RN, CNE
School of Nursing, College of Health and Human Sciences, Northern Illinois University

Purpose
Health racial and ethnic disparities are a well-established issue throughout the healthcare system and obstetrics is no exception. The purpose of this poster presentation is to further learn about obstetric-related racial health disparities and what nurses and other healthcare professionals can do to reduce them.

Background
In Illinois maternal mortality rates of black women has been disproportionately high. For example, from 2002 – 2012 35.3% of maternal deaths were non-Hispanic black women; however, in 2010 black women only made up 17.1% of live births. The reversal of this trend is long overdue.

Method
- Literature review of articles that are peer reviewed scholarly articles and published in health journals.
- UpToDate.com peer reviewed articles
- Key words searched included: maternal mortality, racial health disparities, obstetric health, preventability, pregnancy-related death, disparities.

Discussion
- Understanding the extent of racial/ethnic disparities in obstetrics is imperative to improving outcomes.
- Effective cross-cultural communication between health care professionals and patients is an important step in providing quality care and reducing disparities. Using appropriate interpreter services and providing information at the patients’ health literacy level are key factors in clear communication.
- Individualized care includes identifying patients’ specific needs. Understanding local disparities and knowing community resources can greatly improve patient outcomes.

Resources

Maternal Mortality Chart for the U.S. (CDC, 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 Live Births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Racial Disparity for the U.S. Maternal Deaths 2011-2014 (CDC, 2018)

- White: 10.0
- Black: 20.0
- Other Races: 15.0

Physician Recommendations (ACOG, 2015)
- Educate staff and colleagues on community resources.
- Collaborate with professionals in Public Health about local disparities, environmental exposures, health education, health literacy, and women’s health services and outcomes.
- Be an advocate within the health system and community for improvement of women’s health care policies to reduce disparities at the local, state,

Nursing Recommendation (JOGNN, 2018)
- Assess disparities using reliable measurement — use of geographic information system (GIS).
- Reduce barriers to communication — interpreter services.
- Structuring care — access to electronic or paper records, follow-up plan, reproductive life plan.

© 2023 Northern Illinois University