Meeting the Challenges of Black Maternal & Neonatal Mortality & Morbidity

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Objectives:
1. Describe black maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality in Kentucky and the United States
2. Describe the factors that contribute to increased mortality and morbidity rates in African Americans.
3. Discuss evidence based strategies that can reduce the rates of Black Maternal and Neonatal Mortality and Morbidity.

Definitions per the CDC

Pregnancy Associated Death: the death of a woman while pregnant or within one year of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of cause. (WHO calls these “pregnancy related”)

Pregnancy Related Death: the death of a woman during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy.

Maternal Mortality Ratio: the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. Typically reported as a ratio per 100,000 births.

Maternal Mortality: How are we doing in the US?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that maternal mortality rates have fallen globally by nearly 44 percent from 1990 to 2015; however, the maternal mortality rate has increased in the United States (U.S.).
- In 2015, the U.S. ranked 46th among the 181 countries with a maternal mortality rate that is among the highest of developed countries.
- Globally, the United States ranks 57th in the world for infant mortality and 48th for maternal mortality.
Trends in the United States

Severe Maternal Morbidity: the “near misses”

- Severe maternal morbidity (SMM) is nearly 100 times more common than maternal mortality.
- In 2014, more than 50,000 U.S. women were affected by SMM. SMM includes unexpected outcomes of labor and delivery that result in significant short- or long-term consequences to a woman’s health.
- Similar to maternal death, SMM has been on the rise in the U.S. for the past 2 decades. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that the rates for most SMM indicators increased between 1993 and 2014, with the largest relative increases observed for blood transfusions, acute myocardial infarction or aneurysm, acute renal failure, and adult respiratory distress syndrome. These complications of labor and delivery have significant short- and long-term outcomes.
Infant Mortality in the US

Definition per the CDC: Infant Mortality
- Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. In addition to giving us key information about maternal and infant health, the infant mortality rate is an important marker of the overall health of a society.
- In 2017, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- In 2017, Kentucky’s infant mortality rate was 6.2 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Causes of Infant Mortality, per the CDC
- Over 22,000 infants died in the United States in 2017. The five leading causes of infant death in 2017 were:
  - Birth defects.
  - Preterm birth and low birth weight.
  - Maternal pregnancy complications.
  - Sudden infant death syndrome.
  - Injuries (e.g., suffocation).

From The March of Dimes
2018 Premature Birth Report Card
Premature birth rates & grades:
- Louisville, 10.9%=D.
- Kentucky, 11.1%=D.
- United States, 9.9%=C.

MARCHOFDIMES.ORG/REPORT CARD
From The March of Dimes’ 2018 Premature Birth Report Card

In the United States, the preterm birth rate for black women is 49% higher than the rate among all other women.

MARCHOFDIMES.ORG/REPORT CARD

Infant Mortality Rates by Race & Ethnicity, 2016 (CDC)

Infant mortality rates by race/ethnicity: Kentucky, 2011-2013

Average

Why are America’s black mothers and babies facing this health crisis? What accounts for these disparities?

What are you seeing in your practice? What are you hearing in your community?
RACISM

Allostatic Load

"Weathering" caused by the burden of carrying an increased ALLOSTATIC LOAD refers to continual exposures to stress that overtime erode the health and wellbeing of individuals.

The Social Determinants of Health

How does racism play a role in each of the social determinants of health?

"Social Determinants are like a societal womb if you will. ....those social determinants affect at least 50% of health outcomes."


Adverse Childhood Experiences, ACEs

What impact do ACEs have?

The three types of ACEs include:

- Adverse
- Exposure
- Maltreatment
- Behavioral
- Disorder
- Dysfunction

What impact do ACEs have?
How does ACEs help us address the problem?

- Epigenetics
- Trauma based care
- Resilience

Self Assessment

Assess for your own intrinsic bias.

Assess your clinical areas for inequities. What does the data tell you about your practice?

Are you providing access to quality care that is respectful, validating, listening, empowering?

What policies in your facility policies need to be changed in order to support black mothers and babies from the effects of racism?

IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSIFIED HEALTHCARE

How many black midwives in Kentucky?  

A 2013 study found that doula-assisted mothers were less likely to deliver babies with low birth weights or with birth complications than were mothers who opted not to receive such support, and they were more likely to breast-feed their infants.

Another study found that mothers attended by female caregivers during labor were less likely than others to have Caesarean births, require painkillers or deliver babies in poor health.

Applying the evidence in our community

Preterm births, low birth weights and infant mortality disproportionately affect Black babies in Louisville.

Here’s what we are doing collectively to reduce preterm birth, low birth weight and infant death:

- Supporting a policy to expand paid parental leave
- Expanding access to community doulas
- Increasing access to Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC)
- Providing breastfeeding educational supports to OB providers
What are we going to do?

- Personally
- In your practice
- Policies at your facility that need to be changed or created
- Community Resources
- Government
  
  Think: funding, laws, awareness