

THE CHALLENGES OF MATERNAL HEALTH IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA: REFLECTIONS AND CONCERNS

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The COVID-19 crisis has left a deep mark on healthcare globally, and one of the issues that concerns us greatly is the effect it has had and will continue to have on mothers' health in the time following the health emergency.

Care during pregnancy is essential to ensure a healthy gestational process. However, during the pandemic, many women chose to reduce and even avoid prenatal medical visits due to fear of contagion in clinical settings. This reduction in antenatal care raises significant concerns about the health of both mothers and fetuses. Prenatal visits are essential to identify problems early and to follow the development of the fetus. Failure to do so could lead to complications that are not detected in a timely manner. (1)

In addition, the pandemic has impacted the mental health of pregnant women. Stress and anxiety related to the uncertainty of the situation and fear of the virus have increased in this demographic. This emotional burden can have negative effects on the health of mothers. (1-2)

The shortage of medical and nursing staff, coupled with the lack of medical resources, is another crucial challenge we face. The pandemic has depleted medical resources and overwhelmed numerous health care systems. This lack of resources could result in a decline in the quality of maternal care in some regions. It is critical to address this shortage and strengthen health care systems to ensure the safety of mothers and newborns. (3)

The disruption of sexual and reproductive health services, including the availability of contraceptives and family planning services, during the pandemic is a cause for concern. This could lead to an increase in unintended pregnancies and a lack of appropriate care options for pregnant women. (3,4)

The economic crisis that arose as a result of the pandemic is also a cause for concern. Job loss and financial instability can affect families' ability to access adequate prenatal care, proper nutrition, and safe housing. These factors can increase the risks to both the health of mothers and fetuses. (1,3)

In addition, health care inequities, highlighted by the pandemic, continue to be a persistent concern. Marginalized and disadvantaged communities face a higher risk of not accessing antenatal care or safe deliveries. It is critical to address this disparity in access to quality maternal care. (5)

Therefore, maternal health in the post-pandemic period presents significant challenges that require detailed attention. It is essential that governments, health organizations and society as a whole work together to address these issues and ensure that mothers and newborns receive the appropriate care they deserve. The pandemic has taught us that maternal health is an essential component of public health and must remain a constant priority on the global health agenda.

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