FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH NEONATAL MORTALITY IN KENYA

BY

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ABSTRACT

One hundred and thirty million infants are born each year worldwide. Four million die in the first 28 days of life. Neonatal deaths account for 40 percent of deaths under age of 5 years worldwide. In Kenya, neonatal deaths account for 60 percent of the overall infant mortality. Despite neonatal mortality representing a significant part of neonatal mortality in Kenya, not so much focus has been given to neonatal mortality and the contributing factors. Factors associated with neonatal mortality in Kenya are not well documented and understood. This study analyzed secondary data from Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2008/09 to identify and determine the factors associated with neonatal mortality in Kenya. Women aged 15 – 49 years (8444) who were either residents or visitors present in the selected household on the night before the survey were interviewed about the birth histories and child bearing. The results of bivariate analysis indicate that, work status, wealth index, birth weight, birth order / interval and size of the child at birth as are significantly associated with neonatal mortality. The regression results show that the odds of having a neonatal death is significant with region of residence, wealth index, work status, birth weight and size of the child at birth. This analysis underscores the need to examine predisposing factors for neonatal mortality and their contribution to the upsurge in infant mortality in Kenya in line with the targets set for MDG 4 by the year 2015. Reducing neonatal mortality is crucial to achieve further gains in child survival. On-going and upcoming programs should address the factors associated with neonatal mortality. The government and donors should focus on interventions to improve wealth index and work status. From the study, there is need to promote the quality and coverage of antenatal care visits and the need to focus on newborn care as part of routine delivery care to promote newborn survival. Further research is also needed to better understand the immediate causes of neonatal deaths, and the findings from such studies should be used to appropriately focus program efforts.