MATERNAL EMERGENCY TRANSPORT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND THEMATIC SYNTHESIS

A. Wilson1, S. Hillman1, M. Rosato2, J. Skelton1, A. Costello2, J. Hussein3, C. MacArthur1, A. Coomarasamy1

1. University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK, B15 2TT
2. UCL Institute for Global Health, London, UK, WC1N 1EH
3. Immpact, University of Aberdeen, Foresterhill, Aberdeen AB25 2ZD

Background: Progress towards Millennium Development Goal 5 (reducing maternal mortality and improving access to reproductive healthcare) has been uneven. Most maternal deaths are preventable with emergency obstetric care, therefore ensuring access is essential. Despite this there is little focused information on emergency transport of pregnant women.

Objectives: Systematically review and synthesize the literature on emergency transport of pregnant women in low-middle income countries, and explore current practices, barriers and facilitators for transport utilization.

Search strategy: MEDLINE, EMBASE, BNI, Cochrane library, CINAHL, African Index Medicus, ASSIA, QUALIDATA, RHL, and Science Citation Index (inception-April 2012) without language restriction.

Selection Criteria: Studies using qualitative methodology reporting on emergency transportation in low-middle income countries.

Data Collection and analysis: Thematic framework and thematic synthesis through examination and translation of common elements.

Main Results: Twenty-nine articles were included. Eight major themes were identified: time for transport, transport options, geography, local support, autonomy, culture, finance, and ergonomics. Key issues were availability and transport speed, terrain, meteorology, support, dependence for decision-making, cultural issues, cost, and lack of safe, comfortable positioning during transport.

Conclusions: Individual themes should be appreciated within local context to provide illumination on barriers and facilitators. Potential solutions include motorcycle ambulance program or collaboration with local taxi services, community education, subsidies, insurance schemes and vehicle maintenance.