



Evaluation of maternal deaths due to cerebrovascular events over a two-year-period

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Objective

Pregnancy induces hormonal, physical and physiological changes which may cause hypertension, hemorrhagic and hematological complications. The changes during pregnancy may lead to pathological disorders that may overlap and be associated with fatal complications like cerebrovascular events.

Methods

Case files of maternal deaths during a two-year-period were reviewed by the Preliminary Investigation Committee for Maternal Deaths. The age, parity, gestational age at birth, delivery route, delivery outcomes, time of death, cause of death and the presenting complaint before death were recorded. Also any existing delay and preventability of maternal death were assessed.

Results

Cerebrovascular events were determined to be the cause of death in 20 cases of maternal deaths which occurred during 2012-2013. The mean age of the cases was 30, 9±6, 79 years. There were 7 women who were grandmultips, while 6 women were nulliparous. The gestational age was greater than 37 weeks in 11 cases and all of them resulted in live births. Death due to cerebrovascular event occurred in 7 and 13 patients during the antepartum and postpartum period, respectively. The referral complaint was headache in 13 patients. Intracranial hemorrhage was diagnosed in 3 patients (15, 8 %). Thrombotic events were found in 9 (47, 4 %) of the 20 patients. Epilepsy is the other diagnosis found in 7 women (36, 8 %). While there was no delay in 13 women, both phase 1 and 3 delays in one case and phase 1 delay in 6 cases were found to be reported. According to the results of delays, 7 maternal deaths were identified as preventable.

Conclusion

The complaint of severe and progressive headaches in pregnant women, and especially in the postpartum period should alert the physician to investigate for an intracranial pathology. In order to prevent morbidity and mortality, a detailed neurological examination is recommended to facilitate early detection and diagnosis of cerebrovascular events in this group of patients.