

REVIEW

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Women's experiences throughout the birthing process in health facilities in Arab countries: a systematic review

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Abstract

Background: Mistreatment of women during facility-based childbirth has become a significant public health issue globally and is gaining worldwide attention. This systematic review of quantitative studies aimed to estimate the prevalence of mistreatment women may experience throughout the birthing process in health facilities in Arab countries. The review also aimed to identify the types of mistreatment, terminology, tools, and methods used to address this topic.

Methodology: The search was conducted using three electronic databases: "PubMed," "Embase," and "CINAHL" in May 2020. Studies meeting the inclusion criteria were included and assessed for risk of bias. The analysis was conducted based on the evidence-based typology developed by Bohren et al. as a guide to try to estimate the prevalence of mistreatment.

Results: Eleven studies out of 174 were included. The included studies belonged to only seven Arab countries out of 22 Arab countries. The mistreatment of women during childbirth is still new in the region. Searching within the included studies yielded diverse and indirect terms that were a proxy for the word mistreatment. These terms were not comprehensive to cover different aspects of the topic. The tools that were used to measure the terms widely varied. Moreover, it was not possible to estimate the prevalence of mistreatment of women due to high heterogeneity among the 11 studies.

Conclusion: The topic of mistreatment of women in Arab countries was not adequately addressed in the studies included in this review. More research on this topic is recommended due to its importance in improving maternal health in the region. However, a standardized and comprehensive terminology for mistreatment of women, a standardized tool, and a standardized methodology are recommended to enable comparability between results and allow pooling to estimate the prevalence.

Keywords: Mistreatment of women, Facility-based childbirth, Proxy, Arab countries, Evidence-based typology

Plain Language Summary

Childbirth is a highly personal and central event in every mother's life. However, several studies have documented unpleasant behaviors that women may face throughout the birthing process in health facilities. These behaviors may

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