Trends and disparities in US maternal death

Amanda Jean Stevenson
University of Colorado Boulder

My work has been supported by the NIH Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development directly (R01-HD101480) and through support for the Colorado Population Center (P2C-HD06613).
Is maternal mortality in the US high and increasing?
Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System (PMSS)

- Medical epidemiologists review records and determine pregnancy-relatedness among deaths during pregnancy and up to 1 year after

- Two sources of data
  - Death records
  - Any linked birth records or fetal death records
Two sources of national maternal death data

Maternal mortality rate or MMR (from NVSS)
Two sources of national maternal death data

- Maternal mortality rate or MMR (from NVSS)
- Pregnancy-related mortality ratio or PRMR (from PMSS)
Most pregnancy-related deaths occur after delivery

2020:

- During pregnancy: 26%
- Day of delivery: 11%
- 1–6 days postpartum: 16%
- 7–42 days postpartum: 20%
- 43–365 days postpartum: 27%

Pregnancy and birth have been getting deadlier by either measure

Maternal mortality rate (MMR)

Pregnancy and birth have been getting deadlier by either measure

Severe racial disparities in maternal death

Previous graphs stopped here

Severe racial disparities in maternal death

Severe racial disparities in maternal death

US maternal mortality is much higher than peer nations.
US maternal mortality is much higher than peer nations

US maternal mortality is much higher than peer nations.
Reducing maternal mortality and morbidity

Maternal mortality and morbidity rates

Exposure to pregnancy and birth

Maternal death and morbidity


Stevenson AJ. The pregnancy-related mortality impact of a total abortion ban in the United States: a research note on increased deaths due to remaining pregnant. Demography 1 December 2021; 58 (6): 2019–2028. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9585908
Reducing maternal mortality and morbidity

Maternal mortality and morbidity rates

Exposure to pregnancy and birth

Maternal death and morbidity

Fertility and pregnancy rates


Stevenson AJ. The pregnancy-related mortality impact of a total abortion ban in the United States: a research note on increased deaths due to remaining pregnant. *Demography* 1 December 2021; 58 (6): 2019–2028. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9585908](https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9585908)
Reducing maternal mortality and morbidity

Maternal mortality and morbidity rates

Exposure to pregnancy and birth

Maternal death and morbidity

Family planning policy

Fertility and pregnancy rates


Stevenson AJ. The pregnancy-related mortality impact of a total abortion ban in the United States: a research note on increased deaths due to remaining pregnant. *Demography* 1 December 2021; 58 (6): 2019–2028. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9585908
Thank you

Amanda.Stevenson@Colorado.edu

Any views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of funders or collaborators.

My work has been supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (R01-HD101480 and P2C-HD06613), William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Society of Family Planning Research Fund, the University of Colorado Boulder Office of Research and Innovation, the University of Colorado Population Center, and the University of Colorado Denver.