

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS OF NEONATES

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ABSTRACT

The most of the neonatal mortality occurs in developing countries mainly due to poor health care. Majority of the neonatal death takes place at home. Proper health care during antenatal, intra natal & post natal period promotes the survival of mother & newborn and allows for early detection & treatment. The fundamental neonatal health care at home by the primary care takers who received health education through health care workers will notably improves the neonatal survival.

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INTRODUCTION

A wide variety of disorders affecting the newborn may originate in utero, during birth or in immediate post natal period. These disorders due to prematurity, genetic mutations, chromosomal abnormality or acquired from environment. The most of the neonatal mortality occurs in developing countries mainly due to poor health care. Majority of the neonatal death takes place at home. Proper health care during antenatal, intra natal & post natal period promotes the survival of mother & newborn and allows for early detection & treatment. The fundamental neonatal health care at home by the primary care takers who received health education through health care workers will notably improves the neonatal survival.

Classification of Neonatal Health Problems

The neonatal health problems are commonly divided into infectious & non infectious diseases.

- **Infectious Diseases**

Most of the neonatal morbidity and mortality occurs in developing countries. The following common infectious diseases are creating major health issues.

- **Sepsis**

Neonatal sepsis or sepsis neonatarum occurs when pathogenic bacteria gain access in to the blood stream. Most of the study revealed that neonatal septicemia occurs in infants less than 90 days of age. Early-onset neonatal sepsis (1st week of life) usually results from organisms acquired from the maternal genital tract during birth and often is associated with maternal complications; late-onset neonatal sepsis (7-28 days) is more likely to be caused by organisms acquired from the environment.

- **Omphalitis**

Localized umbilical infection is not prevented and may be inadequately treated in developing-country settings, it may be associated with the subsequent development neonatal sepsis.

- **Neonatal Meningitis**

Acute bacterial meningitis may be caused by variety of bacteria like E. coli, klebsiella aerogenes, streptococcus fecalis, staphylococcus aureus. These organisms cause meningitis in mainly in neonates. Early infants less than 2 months of age, group B streptococcus and E.coli accounts for 70% cases of meningitis.

- **Neonatal Pneumonia**

The cause for early onset of pneumonia is genital tract of the mother during labor and the cause for late onset of pneumonia is mainly due to unhygienic practices at hospital and home. Streptococcus pneumonia is the most frequent cause. The pneumonia is mainly common among premature & low birth weight babies.

- **Diarrheal Disease**

Most of the community-based studies suggested that diarrhea is responsible for approximately 3 percent of all neonatal deaths. Exclusive breast feeding protects neonates from diarrhea.

- **Neonatal Tetanus**

The causes for neonatal tetanus are: the mother who are not immunized with TT vaccination during pregnancy, delivery by the untrained birth attendant & unhygienic umbilical cord care during first week of life.

- **Noninfectious Conditions**

- **Neonatal Asphyxia**

The neonatal asphyxia is very high in developing countries due to poor health care, unhygienic labor & neonatal care practices and the lack of appropriate interventions. It is mainly common among the preterm neonates & low birth weight neonates.

- **Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS)**

It is [previously called hyaline membrane disease, common in premature neonates caused by developmental insufficiency of surfactant production and structural immaturity of the lungs. It is a leading cause of death in preterm neonates.](#)

- **Birth Injury**

Birth injuries occur during the birth process, usually occurs if the infants are large, presentation is breech or if forceful extraction is done. It is potentially preventable and unavoidable and it can be a mechanical type, ischemic or hypoxic type. The most common birth injuries are intra cranial hemorrhage; trauma to the internal organs, spinal cord or peripheral nerves mainly in extremities.

- **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia, defined as a body temperature below 36.5°C, is frequent in newborns, especially those of low birth weight. Neonatal hypothermia often due to lack of attention by health care providers continues to be a very important cause of neonatal deaths. The neonatal hypothermia is mainly due to less subcutaneous fat and reduced amount of brown fat.

- **Neonatal Jaundice/Hyperbilirubinemia**

Hyperbilirubinemia or icterus neonatorum is observed during 1st week of life, an indirect bilirubin level of more than 5 mg/ dl manifests as jaundice. The common types of jaundice are physiological, pathological & breast milk jaundice. The common causes of jaundice include peripartum infection, prematurity & blood group incompatibility. Premature neonates are most vulnerable for kernicterus.

- **Neonatal Hypoglycemia**

A plasma glucose level of less than 30 mg/dl in the first 24 hours of life and less than 45 mg/dl there after constitute hypoglycemia in neonates. Prolonged hypoglycemia may lead to brain damage, affecting normal mental functions and seizures. The common causes of hypoglycemia includes persistent hyper insulinemia, limited glycogen storage, increased glucose use and decreased glycogenolysis and gluconeogenesis.

- **Neonatal Seizure**

The common cause of neonate seizures is developmental problem, birth asphyxia, perinatal infections and metabolic problems. Neonatal seizures may be includes subtle seizures, clonic seizures, tonic seizures and myoclonic seizures. Acute neonatal seizures & it's underlying cause should be treated aggressively to prevent mortality related complications.

COMMON MINOR DISORDERS OF NEWBORN

- Ophthalmia neonatorum
- Oral thrush
- Perianal thrush
- Neonatal mastitis
- Rhinitis
- Urinary tract infection
- Constipation
- Frequent vomiting

CONCLUSIONS

Developing acknowledgment of the size of neonatal mortality and dreariness in developing nations highlights the requirement for medicinal care interventions that particularly focus on the infant. The essential enhancements in care that could significantly enhance neonatal survival include routine neonatal care at home by the mother and relatives who have received guidelines in perfect and safe neonatal care practices. In case of serious diseases, particularly systemic

contamination & infection, prompt assessment and treatment can save lives. In the event that referral is unrealistic or satisfactory, home-based administration of the condition becomes essential.

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