

# Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing

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## Community perceptions of socio-cultural factors that influence maternal mortality and their perspectives on how it could be prevented in Southeast Nigeria

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Maternal mortality is a global health issue with developing countries, such as Nigeria having an unacceptably high occurrence and levels of maternal death especially in the poor and rural communities (UNDP, 2015). Globally, Nigeria and India have been reported as the two countries which are hardest hit by maternal mortality. This research is an investigation of the socio-cultural factors that influence maternal mortality in a South Eastern Nigerian community, and what members of this community perceive to be the best approaches to improve maternal health to help reduce maternal mortality. The databases which were searched for a review of previous empirical research on maternal mortality included Intermed, the UK's largest online database for midwifery articles, MEDLINE, CINAHL, Science Direct, Web of Science and Google scholar. The databases were explored using the following keywords: Maternal death/mortality, pregnancy, childbirth, culture, belief, death of women, prevention. The study used a qualitative methodology, which included focus group discussions and in-depth one-to-one interviews as the methods of data collection. The sample consisted of 39 participants included were traditional birth attendants, midwives, women, doctors, the village head, religious leader, and the youth leader. Initial findings suggest that, cultural beliefs and religious activities about childbirth as an obligation which every woman must obey, female genital mutilation, spiritual powers (Ogbanje), and also the position of women in the society influence the outcomes of pregnancy and increase the potential for maternal mortality. Thus, an understanding of the impact of cultural dynamics and influences on maternal health is needed for effective public health intervention to improve maternal health in Nigeria. This is because culture plays a vital role in the health of the individual, the family and the community.

### Biography

Joy Chidinma Oko Uka is a registered Nurse/Midwife (RN, RM, BNSc). She got her Master's degree in Midwifery (MSc Midwifery) from University of Salford Manchester, United Kingdom, and she is currently a PhD student from the same University. She is a young Researcher and Midwifery Lecturer in the Department of Nursing Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Nigeria. She has published 7 papers in reputed Journals.

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