

## The Effect of Social Determinants on Maternal Mortality

I chose to do my topic on the effect of social determinants on maternal mortality. This topic piqued my interest because we watched a video about racial disparity and the effect it has on maternal death during our orientation. The video was incredibly impactful and made me want to follow up on the subject. The first database I searched was PubMed (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>) using the keywords “race” and “maternal death”. The first study I chose is a systematic review and meta-analysis on “Social determinants of pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity in the United States”. A systematic review answers a question by collecting and summarizing empirical evidence that fits rigid pre-specified criteria. A meta-analysis uses statistical methods to summarize the results of these studies. The research study performed a systematic search using Ovid MEDLINE, CINAHL, Popline, Scopus, and ClinicalTrials.gov (TM, 2018). Three authors screened abstracts and two screened full articles for topics that included pregnancy-related death, severe maternal morbidity, and emergency hospitalizations or readmissions. The second database I searched was Up to Date (<https://www.uptodate.com>). I found an overview of maternal mortality that used a multitude of different studies. The absence of high-quality, population-based data is one of the challenges of measuring maternal mortality. In this study direct household surveys and censuses were used, as well as examining various databases for quantitative evidence. After analyzing the first study I found empirical evidence that demonstrated a direct correlation between minority race/ethnicity and maternal death rates. Other causative factors that contribute to maternal mortality include lower education levels and public or no insurance coverage. There was no direct correlation found between socioeconomic status, political, or cultural context and maternal deaths. The second article supported the first article, finding a direct correlation between minority races and maternal mortality. “There is significant disparity in maternal mortality in the United States for Black females compared with White females and females of other races, and this disparity appears to be worsening. The pregnancy-related mortality ratio per 100,000 live births were

approximately 3.3 and 2.5 times higher for Black and American Indian females, respectively, compared with White females.” (Brown, 2022). Circumstances that lead to maternal mortality are multifactorial and complex. Delay in the decision to seek care, delay in arrival to an appropriate medical care facility, and delay in receiving adequate care once arriving to that facility are the three main contributors. As for risk reduction and treatment, forty to sixty percent of maternal deaths are considered preventable. One report suggested that the following interventions will aid in reducing the maternal mortality rate: safe abortion, family planning with birth spacing and contraception, hemorrhage prevention, C-sections when indicated, treatment prevention of eclampsia and treatment of preeclampsia. For racial minorities in the United States, structural barriers, comorbidities, and social determinants of health are all strong contributors to maternal mortality. Better use of resources, rather than a lack of resources, is a major objective in reducing maternal deaths. This was a very sad topic to research, but it also provided me with restored optimism. As a future nurse, being informed of this disparity early on in my education, I can work to prevent it. While empirical studies prove that race and ethnicity, lack of proper insurance, and low levels of education contribute to maternal morbidity, it is the preventable interventions that nurses play a key part in that gives me hope for the future.

## Citations

TM;, W. E. G. K. B. H. E. A. J. (n.d.). *Social determinants of pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity in the United States: A systematic review*. *Obstetrics and gynecology*. Retrieved July 26, 2022, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32168209/>

Brown, Haywood L UpToDate. (n.d.). Retrieved July 26, 2022, from [https://www.uptodate.com/contents/overview-of-maternal-mortality?search=social+determinants+maternal+death&source=search\\_result&selectedTitle=1~150&usage\\_type=default&display\\_rank=1#H962458228](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/overview-of-maternal-mortality?search=social+determinants+maternal+death&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1#H962458228)

# Gapminder Tool: Effect of Blood Pressure and Income on Maternal Deaths

