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Safeguarding Mothers: Audit on female genital mutilation FGM identification, documentation, and care in maternity

Abstract:

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a global health issue affecting over 230 million girls and women, primarily in 30 countries across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Typically performed on girls aged 0–15, FGM violates human rights and poses significant obstetric risks. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights the need for proper identification, documentation, and care for women with FGM. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) Green-top Guideline No. 53 mandates comprehensive safeguarding and management by maternity services. This audit aims to evaluate compliance with national guidelines for identifying, documenting, and managing FGM in our maternity services. This audit reviewed 42 antenatal cases of women with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to assess compliance with national guidelines on identification, documentation, and care. Most women originated from East Africa (33.3%), West Africa (28.5%), and the Middle East (26.1%), with 9.5% undocumented. Type 1 FGM was most common (50%), although 23.8% of cases had an unknown type. The majority (63.4%) attended the clinic between 12–28 weeks, with 66.7% undergoing physical examinations. Risk assessment forms were completed in 66.7%, primarily by midwives (42.8%), while mandatory forms were completed in 54.7%. Vaginal delivery was the most common outcome (59.5%), with low rates of severe complications, including one third-degree tear (4%). Gaps identified include incomplete documentation of FGM types and forms. Recommendations include mandatory training on FGM care, a standardized checklist for documentation, enhanced safeguarding communication, and regular audits to improve compliance and ensure comprehensive care for women with FGM.

Biography

Lovely Thomas is a highly skilled Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, with an MBBS and MS from Government Medical College, Trivandrum. She is a proud member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and holds the MRCOG qualification. Currently working as Registrar at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust Hospital, Dr. Thomas combines her clinical expertise with a passion for advancing women's health. She has presented at international conferences, including the RCOG Congress, and published research in renowned journals. Known for her leadership, communication skills, and commitment to patient care, she actively contributes to research and promotes better healthcare outcomes