ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Health-Seeking Patterns among Fatally Ill Capeverdian Women

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Abstract

The circumstances of 94 deaths among females aged 15-49 years in Cape Verde were investigated to assess their access to effective care. Persons associated with the deceased women were interviewed (verbal autopsy) to explore contributing causes of death, perceived illnesses and treatment efforts. The certainty of diagnosis and avoidability of the fatal outcome were assessed by a panel of experts. A model of health care accessibility is elaborated to identify restricting (delay) factors. Deliberate avoidance of modern medical care and reliance on traditional medicine were major delay factors, while unawareness of the severity of symptoms and affordability limits were minor delay factors in this population. A detailed sorting of cases by health care level is used to identify the effectiveness of diagnosing, referral and care provided. Since a high proportion of avoidable deaths occurred in hospital, the quality of care may have been sub-optimal. (Afr J Reprod Health 2004; 8[3]:176-187)

Keywords: Female mortality, cause of death, verbal autopsy, access to care, Cape Verde

References


