

Mothers and babies in disasters. We can do better.



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Maternity Care in Disasters. New Frameworks for Immediate Action

What are the needs of childbearing women in disasters? Do current disaster management frameworks account for those needs? Can we do better with available knowledge and resources? This research aims to identify new opportunities to improve maternity care in disasters from a maternal perspective.

Introduction

Maternity care is a set of health interventions dedicated to preserving the life and wellbeing of childbearing women and newborns. In critical situations, such as disasters, neglecting specific needs of pregnant women and babies results in higher maternal and neonatal mortality and ill health that may have short, medium, long-term, and even inter-generational consequences.

Current facility-based model of maternity care, relying on social, economic and environmental stability, may not be adequate for disruptive events that have immediate impact on critical infrastructure. The resulting reduction, inaccessibility or interruptions to maternity care, often leave childbearing women on their own, especially in low resource settings.

Methodology

This research takes a critical realist approach to understanding the needs of childbearing women in disasters, with a maternal standpoint and grounded theory methods to identify new opportunities that could be implemented for improved maternity care in disasters, with particular attention to Queensland and Asia-Pacific Region.



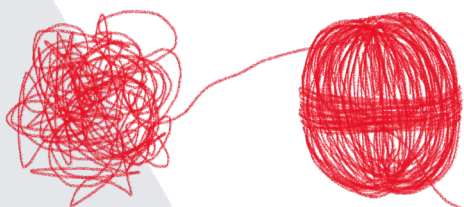
Significance

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has challenged health systems worldwide, causing great concern among childbearing women and their representatives in all income settings, as maternal needs have assumed, minimised, or neglected. The present study addresses the issue of maternity care as a blind spot in disaster management policies and practice.

The study will offer a comprehensive overview of the current interventions and explore new options that account for the real-world needs and expectations of childbearing women, newborns and communities in disasters.

Disasters and climate change, which contributes to the growing number of unforeseen and sudden disasters, represent a growing concern for governments and societies globally. This research responds to the UN system's urgent call for a gender/women based approach in disaster research and management.

This PhD research project has been confirmed by QUT panel of experts and is currently undergoing ethical approval.



Further information

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