

# RESPECTFUL AND DISRESPECTFUL CARE EXPERIENCES AMONG WOMEN WITH POSTPARTUM HAEMORRHAGE IN SELECTED HEALTH FACILITIES IN MALAWI

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- Some women experienced respectful care during labour and childbirth, with opportunities to ask questions about their care.
- Other women described poor provider attitudes including poor communication regarding their condition and verbal abuse
- Investing in RMC during obstetric emergencies such as PPH is an undervalued area that warrants further research and interventions given its potential to improve maternal health outcomes.

## BACKGROUND

- RMC maintains women's dignity, privacy and confidentiality, freedom from harm and mistreatment, informed choice and continuous support during labour and child birth
- Many women continue to receive substandard and disrespectful maternity care in Malawi, but there is limited research on women's experiences of respectful maternity care (RMC).
- Disrespect and abuse are barriers in achieving positive maternal outcomes and mitigating obstetrical complications including postpartum haemorrhage (PPH).
- This study explores women's experiences interacting with providers in PPH care. The Advancements in PPH Care (APPHC) Partnership is co-led by B-R and HEARD Project: addressing key barriers for PPH prevention and treatment.

## METHODS

- This study used an exploratory design to investigate postnatal women's experience of labour, childbirth and management of PPH, including any respectful/disrespectful care\*
- A purposive sample of 17 postpartum women were selected from 25 health facilities: hospitals and primary health centres in Malawi.
- In-depth interviews conducted with women were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and translated from the Chichewa language to English.
- Transcripts were exported into NVIVO version 12

## FINDINGS

### Respectful care

- Some women experienced respectful care including receiving information (self and guardian) with opportunities to ask questions during labour and delivery.

*I was spoken to calmly and she addressed me by my name which was good. She was telling me what am supposed to do, that I shouldn't do anything to the contrary of what am expected to do. Honestly, I saw no problem with the way she was talking to me.*  
—Health Center Postnatal Client

*I was well taken care of because they welcomed me and even the same doctor would get me porridge for me to eat. So for me I was well taken care of.*  
—Hospital Postnatal Client

**\*Respectful Maternity Care Charter: Universal Rights of Mothers and Newborns** clarifies and clearly articulates the rights of women and newborns while receiving maternity care within a healthcare facility  
<https://www.whiteribbonalliance.org/respectful-maternity-care-charter>

## FINDINGS

### Disrespectful care

- Other women experienced verbal abuse (harsh language) and poor rapport and impolite communication with providers.
- Women reported some providers had a negative attitude and disrespected women by not providing updates on their care (e.g., infringing on women's right to information).
- These experiences were reported at all levels of the health system.

*Uuuh their language is not good. They are rude to people and that is the behaviour of most of them. You go to outpatient department, the same thing, they will shout at you. When you are admitted at the maternity ward and they find that you have left something on the floor, and they are mopping they will shout. They don't speak to you politely but shouting at you.*  
—Hospital Postnatal Client

## FINDINGS

*The doctors should not yell at you, they should talk to you in a manner that is welcoming because when they yell at you, you get discouraged and think that I came here to get help and now they are yelling at me. Sometimes it's not that they don't want to help but the mannerism.*

—Hospital Postnatal Client

## FUNDING / FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Breakthrough RESEARCH is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of cooperative agreement no. AID-OAA-A-17-00018. USAID's Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development Project (HEARD) is funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under cooperative agreement AID-OAA-A-17-00002.



USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT