



Informal work and maternal and child health :

A blind spot in public health and research

Introduction

Informal economy workers cross a range of sectors, the most common being street vending, domestic work, waste picking, home-based work and construction. For these workers, caring for themselves and their children presents unique challenges. Mothers who work in the informal sector must continue to bring income to the house-hold, care for their physical and mental health after childbirth, and attempt to exclusively breastfeed their infant and provide nurturing care. These aspects are also possible explanation as to why informal work has remained outside the research and policy agendas of global public health.



Key Highlights

- Informal workers generally do not enjoy minimum wages, maternity leave, job and wage security and predictability or occupational health and safety. Their work is not recognized, marginalized, and often even criminalized.
- We must briefly describe the sale and importance of recognizing informal employment from a health perspective and consider pathways to alleviating the trade-off that mothers working in the informal sector face.
- The interaction between informal livelihood, maternal health and infant care is not substantively reflected in public health thinking.
- The lack of descriptive peer-reviewed reports and intervention studies highlights that research examining the significance of relationships between informal work, variable amounts daily, with few options to withdraw from work or change working conditions after childbirth.
- Seeing women as individuals with their own lives rather than as workers or as mothers, challenges current paradigms for research and policy to protect and promote maternal, new born and child health and development.
- Attempts to find labour regulations for different sectors of informal work are emerging and will need to be informed to include working mothers' health in addition to their rights and earnings as workers. Such labour regulations would create enabling conditions for working mothers to care for themselves and facilitate their children reaching their health and developmental potential.

Read more:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7047022/>

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