



MeasureGender: Measuring gender-based discrimination to better understand maternal mortality

Project type

- interdisciplinary pilot project cross-sector project global health postdoc fellowship

Project duration

May 2021 - April 2022

Research areas involved

- Biomedical sciences Social sciences and humanities
 Public health Engineering and other sciences

Focus areas

Women's health, maternal health, health care research

Project team

Name	Organization	Discipline(s)
PD Dr. Wilm Quentin	Technische Universität Berlin (TUB)	Medicine, health economics, health policy and systems
Clara Orduhan	TUB	Economic engineering
Prof. Dr. Manuela De Allegri	Heidelberg Institute of Global Health (HIGH)	Sociology, health economics, health policy and systems
Dr. Laurène Petitfour	HIGH	Development and health economics
Swati Srivstava	HIGH	Global Health, health economics, health policy and systems



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Narrative Report

MeasureGender aimed to lay the foundations for future analyses of the relationship between gender-based discrimination and maternal health outcomes, including maternal mortality, by developing a culturally adapted and reliable tool for measuring gender-based discrimination. More specific objectives included: (1) To provide a systematic overview of existing definitions and measures of gender-based discrimination and their application in the health literature, (2) to understand the views and framings of policy makers, civil society groups, researchers, and women in Sub-Saharan Africa about gender-based discrimination, and (3) to identify relevant attributes and to develop a quantitative tool (e.g. a questionnaire) to allow a reliable and comprehensive measurement of gender-based discrimination in future health surveys.

The project was implemented by a multidisciplinary core team based at TUB and HIGH, including expertise from medicine, public health, health economics, social sciences, and engineering.

Researchers of the two institutions built strong links over the course of the project. During regular project meetings, the entire team provided input on all aspects of work. Work package 1, which was led by HIGH, performed a Scoping Review of Measures and Definitions of Gender-Based Discrimination Linked to Health Outcomes in Low and Middle-Income Countries. A review protocol is published in BMJ Open.

“...it became apparent that we all brought different perspectives on the definitions on gender-based discrimination and the indicators needed to capture it. In the process of building the survey, we had to reconcile these different views and we believe that in doing so, the product substantially improved.”

Work package 2, which was led by TUB, conducted focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with women in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, and Ghana. We had originally planned to conduct interviews ourselves. However, given the COVID situation, field research in countries was conducted by national researchers who were subcontracted for data collection and analysis. In fact, the establishment of collaboration with researchers in African countries has been a strength of the project. It has contributed to establishing new links and strengthening collaboration of researchers at TUB with researchers in 3 African countries. This would not have been possible without the contacts of HIGH with researchers in Burkina Faso and Tanzania. A total of 17 focus groups and 32 in-depth interviews were carried out with women in the three countries. Input from stakeholders was collected during webinars in Ghana, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso.

Work package 3 aimed at developing a new tool for measuring gender-based discrimination and was carried out jointly by TUB and HIGH. The new tool is based on the results of the two other work packages. It aggregates concepts and questions identified in the scoping review into a new questionnaire for measuring gender-based discrimination. The proposed tool includes five dimensions: (1) Working status and independent ownership of assets, (2) Intra-household resource allocation, (3) Autonomy in decision-making power, (4) Societal gender roles, and (5) Violence. In addition, it suggests some complementary information that should be collected at the national or regional level, e.g. legal background information, female education.



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