

SOGC Calls for National Canadian Surveillance System to Reduce Maternal Mortality

Ottawa – November 8, 2017 - The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) is calling for a national surveillance system to accurately track the incidence of maternal mortality and severe morbidity in Canada. A review article, appearing in this month's *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada* (JOGC), says miscalculated or underreported data collection makes it difficult to set targets and develop programs, policies, priorities and interventions that could save lives.

“Although Canada has the lowest maternal mortality rate among North American countries, we know the data is not capturing many non-obstetric causes, and near misses,” says Dr. Jocelynn Cook, Chief Scientific Officer, SOGC. “We also believe the WHO definitions of maternal mortality and morbidity need to be extended to 42 days following childbirth, and include other causes due to mental health, substance use, violence and accidents.”

The SOGC has been working in partnership with the Canadian Perinatal Surveillance System, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Canadian and international experts to set the table for future talks with provinces and territories. Maternal death review committees and their scope vary greatly across the country and are not necessarily aligned with pregnancy-related questions that appear on medical death certificates. A national framework and dataset would enable health care providers to set reduction targets, and improve care.

“Our goal as health care providers is to make sure every pregnant woman and her child are provided the best care possible across the country in both large and small communities,” says Dr. Jennifer Blake CEO, SOGC. “If preventable issues can be better identified and addressed, fewer families will have to deal with devastating and unexpected loss.”

The review article can be accessed here: [http://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163\(17\)30473-5/abstract](http://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163(17)30473-5/abstract)

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About the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to

advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information visit www.sogc.org.