

No Labouring Woman Should Die from Postpartum Hemorrhage in Modern Times



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The Number 1 direct cause of maternal mortality globally is severe bleeding after childbirth, also known as postpartum hemorrhage (PPH).

Each year, around 14 million women experience PPH globally, resulting in nearly 70,000 maternal deaths. The majority of PPH — about 98% — occurs immediately post-delivery, though some patients present with delayed PPH.

In Lebanon, from 2018 to 2020, a total of 49 women died before, during, or after childbirth, with hemorrhage being the most frequent cause, accounting for 16 fatalities.

According to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, postpartum hemorrhage is defined as a cumulative blood loss of greater than or equal to 1,000 mL, or blood loss accompanied by signs or symptoms of hypovolemia within 24 hours after the birth process.

What are the four most common causes of postpartum hemorrhage?

- 1- Uterine atony (insufficient uterine contraction)
- 2- Trauma (lacerations, rupture, inversion)
- 3- Retained tissue or abnormal placentation
- 4- Bleeding tendency

How to prevent postpartum hemorrhage?

1- Identify pregnant women who are at risk is the most important first step. Known risk factors for PPH include the following: antepartum hemorrhage, augmented labor, chorioamnionitis, fetal macrosomia, maternal anemia, maternal obesity, multifetal gestation, preeclampsia, primiparity, prolonged labor.

2- Be ready and well prepared in a tertiary care center/ hospital with:

- Experienced obstetrician
- Availability of blood products
- Availability of proper medications
- Availability of proper devices
- Availability of an interventional radiologist experienced with uterine artery embolization

The obstetrician should be able to coordinate the above and to also be capable of intervening surgically whenever needed.

What is the latest treatment modality?

A new FDA-approved specially designed device is now available in Lebanon: It can effectively control PPH in less than 3 minutes in 95% of selected cases, therefore saving precious lives. It was already launched at Bellevue Medical Center last April.



Dr. Rechdan using the device



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