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Background

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) pregnant people are 2-4 times more likely to experience maternal mortality, with higher rates in urban areas. Racial misclassification on death certificates and the aggregation of race/ethnicity data for small sample sizes may contribute to masking an even higher maternal mortality rate for Indigenous women, further contributing to the erasure of Indigenous peoples and hindering the ability to address inequities.

Methods

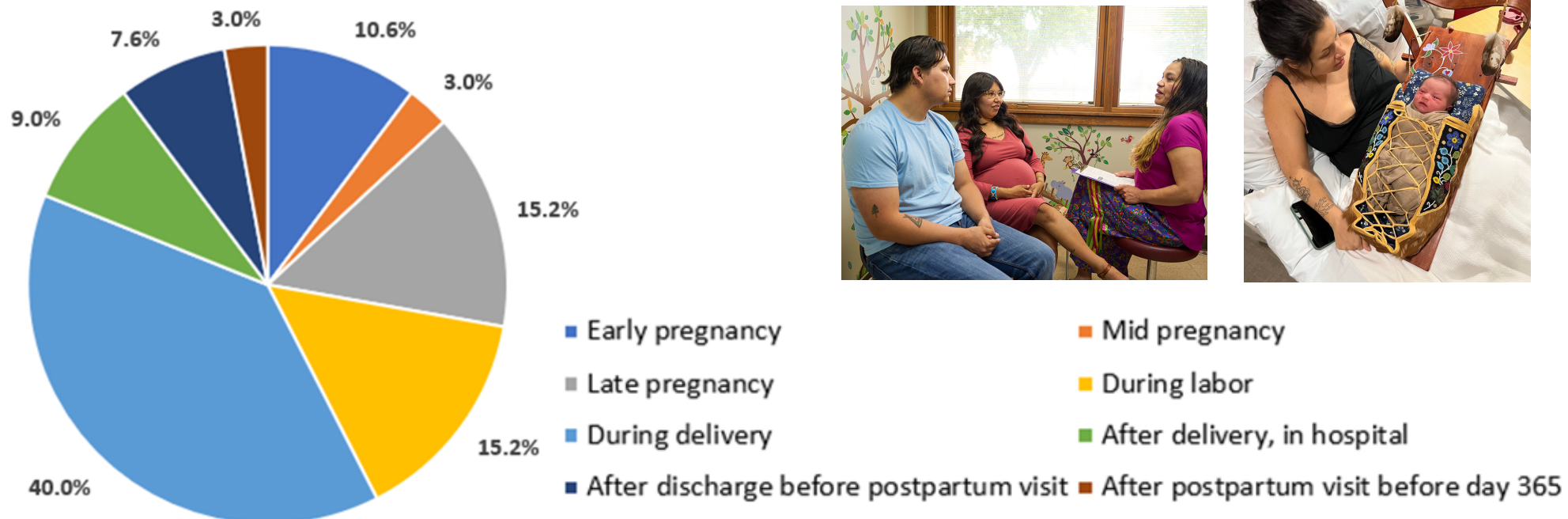
The Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PQC) of Missouri iteratively developed 46 questions assessing baseline knowledge surrounding risk factors for maternal mortality and perceived discrimination within the health system that contributes to maternal mortality. A mailing list was used to distribute the questionnaire to a racially representative sample across the MO. This sub-study looks at data for AI. Study approved by Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City IRB (#001093)

Results

| Participant Demographics (N=66) | n | Mean (SD) / % |
|--|----|---------------|
| Age | 66 | 37.2 (± 11.8) |
| Education (> high school) | 47 | 71.2% |
| Married | 31 | 47.0% |
| Employed | 33 | 50.0% |
| Own Home | 21 | 31.8% |
| Insurance | | |
| Private | 34 | 51.5% |
| Medicaid | 21 | 31.8% |
| None | 11 | 16.7% |
| Number of pregnancies | 64 | 2.8 (± 2.2) |
| Willing to get COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy | 22 | 33.3% |
| Aware of deaths due to pregnancy | 52 | 78.8% |
| Know someone that died due to pregnancy | 14 | 21.2% |

78.8% of participants reported awareness of pregnancy-related deaths, and 63% believed the numbers in MO were higher than in other states. 21.2% reported knowing someone who died during pregnancy. When asked about personal concerns about dying during pregnancy, 21.2% were extremely/very concerned. 59.1% believed that discrimination played a role in maternal mortality, and 40.7% avoided medical care because of a fear/lack of trust in hospitals.

Indigenous people's perceptions of what time period has the highest risk for a death related to pregnancy



Discussion

No studies directly address American Indian (AI) mothers' perceptions of maternal mortality. AI women are less likely to obtain prenatal care in the first trimester, which often results in various health disparities. Barriers to prenatal care among AI involve personal beliefs, cultural practices, and attitudes. In several studies, AI reported a lack of trust with their providers due to negative experiences during pregnancy and delivery.



Conclusion

Maternal mortality among American Indians is a multifaceted issue that is not fully understood. We work with PQC in Missouri to raise awareness of maternal mortality. We aim to replicate this study in KS. Results will aid in creating a maternal health intervention co-created with and tailored for AI pregnant people.