

Abstract

African American women are three times more likely to die of pregnancy related complications than their white counterparts. Without proper acknowledgement of the issues facing this population, the maternal outcome for African American women may remain dismal. The aim of this research was to review the existing literature on the drivers of racial disparities in maternal healthcare and to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed methods aimed at improving outcomes. An integrative review of the literature was conducted using TRIP, CINAHL and PubMed databases. A total of 19 articles were included in this review. Results revealed three promising methods for reducing disparities: First, the use of Healthcare Information Technology (IT) increased the standardization of care, highlighted objective medical histories, and enabled clinical decision support systems. Second, health education programs increased maternal health literacy, and empowered greater self-care and self-advocacy. Third, increased presence of underrepresented minority (URM) in professional healthcare roles increased the quality of health care delivered when treating patients with similar demographics. In these ways, the incidence of morbidity and mortality among the African American maternal population may decrease.