Maternal deaths

42,362

WHO guidelines. These guidelines delineate direct causes of death, identified and classified according to recently revised categories of delays that contribute to maternal death, as identified during care. Measures related to the death included whether the woman had given birth or aborted a pregnancy prior to her death, the time between the delivery or abortion and the death, and the location of death (at home, en route to the camp health facility, at the camp health facility, en route to the referral health facility or at the referral facility).

Finally, from the qualitative case histories gathered by the review teams, we compiled information on the three categories of delays that contribute to maternal death, as well as information on the causes of death, which were identified and classified according to recently revised WHO guidelines. These guidelines delineate direct causes of death, various indirect causes of death (including nonobstetric complications and unknown or coincidental causes) and contributing causes (preexisting conditions or conditions that may arise during pregnancy and are aggravated by pregnancy, such as hepatitis, malaria, tuberculosis, anemia, heart disease, AIDS, tetanus and injuries).

In addition, using simple matrices, we collected contextual data on the emergency obstetric care services available in the camps, the staff providing those services and the barriers to access to care. Discussions with field staff were held to clarify this information and provide additional detail when needed. Two members of the research team entered data from reports into a spreadsheet. A subset of reports was coded by both investigators to check for coding consistency; discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was reached, and data entry rules were modified as needed. Data were then imported into SPSS version 18.0 to calculate descriptive statistics. We calculated maternal mortality ratios for each country, and coded the qualitative histories given in the Maternal Death Review Reports to tabulate avoidable factors mentioned by the maternal death investigating teams. Narratives were analyzed with a critical eye for the identification of additional information on the circumstances surrounding the maternal death,