

**Maternal death** , a maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.

Maternal deaths should be subdivided into two groups:

*Direct obstetric deaths* : those resulting from obstetric complications of the pregnant state (pregnancy, labour and puerperium), from interventions, omissions, incorrect treatment, or from a chain of events resulting from any of the above.

*Indirect obstetric deaths* : those resulting from previous existing disease or disease that developed during pregnancy and which was not due to direct obstetric causes, but which was aggravated by physiologic effects of pregnancy.

In order to improve the quality of maternal mortality data and provide alternative methods of collecting data on deaths during pregnancy or related to it, as well as encouraging the recording of deaths from obstetric causes occurring more than 42 days following termination of pregnancy, the 43rd World Health Assembly in 1990 adopted the recommendation that countries consider the inclusion on death certificates of questions regarding current pregnancy and pregnancy within one year preceding death.

## Related concepts

- [Cause of death](#)

## Statistical data

- [Causes of death statistics](#)
- [Health statistics at regional level - causes of death](#)

## Source

- [World Health Organization](#)