



UNFPA

UNFPA Maternal Mortality Update 2006

**Expectation and Delivery:
Investing in Midwives and Others with Midwifery Skills**

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and Others with Midwifery Skills*



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Abbreviations used in the text

AMDD	Averting Maternal Death and Disability Project, Columbia University
CASA	<i>Centro Para los Adolescentes de San Miguel de Allende (Mexico)</i>
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
EmOC	Emergency obstetric care (and see Glossary, p.62)
FCI	Family Care International (FCI)
FIGO	International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics
ICM	International Confederation of Midwives
IMCI	integrated management of childhood illnesses
IMMPACT	Initiative for Maternal Mortality Programme Assessment Aberdeen University, Scotland, UK
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal mortality ratios
MOH	Ministry of health
MOMS	Midwives and others with midwifery skills
MVA	Manual vacuum aspirator
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization (WHO)
PHC/FP	Primary health care including family planning
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SBA	Skilled birth attendant
SEARO	South-east Asia Regional Office (WHO)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections
TBA	Traditional birth attendant
TFR	Total fertility rate
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

Preface

“More lives could be saved if all women had access to voluntary family planning, ensuring that births are wanted, to skilled attendance at all births and to emergency obstetric care. UNFPA is committed to reducing the high levels of maternal death and disability that exist today” – Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA.

Improving women’s health is the fifth Millennium Development Goal as adopted by heads of states in September 2000. The agreed target is to reduce, by 2015, maternal mortality in developing countries by 75% of the 1990 figure. The target is ambitious and many countries will have to fight hard to reach it. The political commitment was renewed at the September 2005 World Summit and strengthened in 2006 with the additional target of universal access to reproductive health. Therefore, it is imperative to adopt an integrated approach to reproductive health and donors have offered significant assistance for resources to support those activities.

The improvement of women’s health necessitates interventions in areas beyond medical care. Those health outcomes will only improve when the following issues are addressed: gender equality, rights-based programming, and the integration of the various components in the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health, including adolescent sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention.

Saving mothers’ lives is widely recognized as an imperative for social and economic development, as well as a human rights imperative. UNFPA affirms that it is the basic right of every woman and baby to have the best available care to enable them to survive pregnancy and childbirth in good health. While the techniques and the strategies to address maternal health are better known and widely accepted, the factor most neglected in the last decade is human resources. Maternal mortality and morbidity cannot be reduced without midwives and other service providers with technical skills; yet the numbers of these skilled providers have not significantly increased and have even started to decrease in some countries, as the result of migration, losses from HIV/AIDS and dissatisfaction with pay and working conditions. At the same time, issues of quality of care remain, particularly where health systems do not play their supportive role.

In response, UNFPA has decided to make the fifth MDG its priority, and has widely promoted the strengthening of health systems with special emphasis on human resources for health, midwifery being an important aspect, along with commodity security and monitoring and evaluation.

This is the fourth issue of the *Maternal Mortality Update* which is published every two years by the Technical Support Division of UNFPA. Like its predecessors, it is intended for all staff, partners and donors as well as the general public, to provide them with the latest information about UNFPA institutional priorities and programmes with regard to maternal mortality and morbidity reduction. Following the initiative of the *Maternal Mortality Update 2004: Delivering into Good Hands*, and as a contribution to the call by WHO in their *World Health Report 2006* on the Health Workforce, this issue focuses on the key staff responsible for maternal health care: midwives and others with midwifery skills. It was prepared in collaboration with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM).

As in the past, the document is in two parts: Part 1 "Investing in MOMS" reviews the issues around midwives and others with midwifery skills: who they are, what they do and how to scale up professional attendance at all births. This part draws largely from the discussions and recommendations of two international meetings held in 2006, in partnership with ICM and WHO: *the New York Workshop on Midwives* in March and *the Hammamet Forum on Midwifery in the Community* in December. Part 2 "Voices from the Field" is a review of UNFPA initiatives in countries in relation to midwives and midwifery. Countries belonging to all four of UNFPA's geographic divisions have sent their contributions which describe their achievements and constraints in addressing human resources for maternal health, together with evaluation reports when available.

UNFPA hopes that this publication will be useful and serve as a reference for future programmes.



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