



Promoting the health of mothers and newborns during birth and the postnatal period

Report of the Collaborative Safe Motherhood
Pre Congress Workshop

International Confederation of Midwives
Brisbane, Australia, July 21 - 23, 2005



World Health
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Department of
Making Pregnancy Safer

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The death of a woman (and often her unborn/newborn child) is always a disaster, an unnecessary and wasteful event which carries with it a huge burden of human grief and pain. It is outrageous when it is realised that the death need not have happened. It could have been prevented. Realising this, the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) determined to enhance the contribution by midwives to the achievement of the goals of the Safe Motherhood Initiative. Since 1987 ICM and its member associations have been addressing Safe Motherhood issues through international and regional workshops focusing on different aspects of the Safe Motherhood Initiative. The international workshops are conducted before each international triennial congress as a pre congress workshop. The regional workshops to date have been carried out before each executive committee meeting in a developing country. So far the pre congress workshop themes have been

- 1987: Women's Health and the Midwife: A Global Perspective
- 1990: Midwifery Education: Action for Safe Motherhood.
- 1993: Midwifery Practice: Measuring, Developing and Mobilising Quality Care.
- 1996: Strengthening Midwifery within Safe Motherhood Country Plans – Women's Health, Midwives and Public Policy.
- 1999: Frontiers of Midwifery Care: STDs/HIV/AIDS in Safe Motherhood.
- 2002: The Role of Midwives in the Prevention of Gender Based Violence among Adolescent Girls and Women: A Safe Motherhood Intervention.

This year's theme (2005) was "Promoting the Health of Mothers and Newborns during Pregnancy, Birth and the Postnatal Period". This topic was intended to bring back senior midwives: midwife educators, administrators and midwife managers, to basics. It is basic midwifery care which makes the difference to the health outcome of mothers and newborn babies. In the face of repeated complications, the tendency is to strengthen skills to handle the abnormal, occasionally at the detriment of the basic skills. Doing that would unfortunately deny a midwife the full utilisation of the midwife's unique position in the community and the health care system. The uniqueness of the midwife's position stems from the fact that the midwife chose to prepare herself/himself to be "with women" at the most crucial time of their lives. The midwife accepts through education and training, the responsibility of caring for women throughout their reproductive years and to concern themselves with promotive and preventive health action in families and communities. Basic midwifery skills are the ones that make the midwife the best person to attend a birth - a skilled attendant.

The intention of this report was to collate, synthesise and disseminate the valuable information and thoughts that came out of this important two day meeting. We welcome any questions, comments and suggestions. Please direct these to the author of this report, Nester T. Moyo, ICM Programme Manager at n.moyo@internationalmidwives.org.

The International Confederation of Midwives is sincerely grateful to all those who contributed in some way or another towards the success of this workshop. Although it is not possible to have all the names of those people appear below, we do wish to acknowledge the following:

ICM Partner Organizations who collaborated with us on this Workshop:

- World Health Organization (WHO) for financial and technical support
- United Nations Population Fund Headquarters for financial support
- Prevention of Postpartum Haemorrhage Initiative for technical and financial support
- Saving Newborn Lives/Save the Children for technical support and sponsorship of participants

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- Johnson and Johnson Worldwide Baby for the educational grant to support participants
- American College of Nurse-Midwives participant sponsorship
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- Dr Monir Islam, Director of Making Pregnancy Safer, WHO Headquarters Geneva for the key welcoming and opening speech for the workshop and his support throughout the workshop.
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- The Workshop facilitators for their support and work throughout:
 - Della Sherratt Regional Adviser for Gender and Women's Affairs, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO)
 - Debra Armbruster, Director Prevention of Postpartum Haemorrhage Initiative
 - Frances Ganges Midwife Consultant
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