#### INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF CHILDHOOD ILLNESS

## MANAGEMENT OF THE SICK YOUNG INFANT AGE 1 WEEK UP TO 2 MONTHS

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### **CONTENTS**

INTR	ODUCI	TION	. 1	
1.0	ASSESS AND CLASSIFY THE SICK YOUNG INFANT			
	1.1	CHECK THE YOUNG INFANT FOR POSSIBLE BACTERIAL INFECTION	. 4	
	EXER	CISE A	10	
	1.2 1.3	CLASSIFY ALL SICK YOUNG INFANTS FOR BACTERIAL INFECTION		
	1.4	CLASSIFY DIARRHOEA		
	EXER	CISE B	15	
	1.5	THEN CHECK FOR FEEDING PROBLEM OR LOW WEIGHT	19	
		1.5.1 Ask About Feeding and Determine Weight for Age		
	EXER	CISE C	27	
	EXER	CISE D	29	
	1.6 1.7	CLASSIFY FEEDING THEN CHECK THE YOUNG INFANT'S IMMUNIZATION STATUS		
	1.8	ASSESS OTHER PROBLEMS	33	
	EXER	CISE E	35	
2.0 II	DENTIF	Y APPROPRIATE TREATMENT	38	
	2.1	DETERMINE IF THE YOUNG INFANT NEEDS URGENT REFERRAL	38	
	2.2	IDENTIFY TREATMENTS FOR A YOUNG INFANT WHO		
	2.3	DOES NOT NEED URGENT REFERRAL IDENTIFY URGENT, PRE-REFERRAL TREATMENT NEEDED		
	2.4 2.5	GIVE URGENT PRE-REFERRAL TREATMENTS	39	

3.0		T THE SICK YOUNG INFANT AND COUNSEL THE HER	41
	3.1 3.2	GIVE AN APPROPRIATE ORAL ANTIBIOTICGIVE FIRST DOSE OF INTRAMUSCULAR ANTIBIOTICS	
	EXER	CISE F	44
	3.3 3.4 3.5	TO TREAT DIARRHOEA, SEE TREAT THE CHILDIMMUNIZE EVERY SICK YOUNG INFANT, AS NEEDED TEACH THE MOTHER TO TREAT LOCAL INFECTIONS	
	3.6	AT HOME TEACH CORRECT POSITIONING AND ATTACHMENT FOR BREASTFEEDING	
	EXER	CISE G	
	3.7	ADVISE MOTHER TO GIVE HOME CARE FOR THE YOUNG INFANT	53
	EXER	CISE H	54
ANNI	EX:	RECORDING FORM: Management of the Sick Young Infant Age 1 Week up to 2 Months	57

#### INTRODUCTION

In this module you will learn to manage a sick young infant age 1 week up to 2 months. The process is very similar to the one you have learned for managing the sick child age 2 months up to 5 years. All the steps are on one chart:

Assess Classify Treat Counsel the mother Follow-up

Young infants have special characteristics that must be considered when classifying their illness. They can become sick and die very quickly from serious bacterial infections. They frequently have only general signs such as few movements, fever, or low body temperature. Mild chest indrawing is normal in young infants because their chest wall is soft. For these reasons, you will assess, classify and treat the young infant somewhat differently than an older infant or young child. The *YOUNG INFANT* chart lists the special signs to assess, classifications, and treatments for young infants.

{Module 06 – page 001.jpg}

This chart is not used for a sick newborn, that is a young infant who is less than 1 week of age. In the first week of life, newborn infants are often sick from conditions related to labour and delivery or have conditions which require special management. Health workers who care for sick newborns must be familiar with labour and delivery and their complications. Therefore, training in management of sick newborns will be combined with training in labour and delivery in another course.

There is a special recording form for young infants. It is similar in format to the form for older infants and young children. It lists signs to assess in a young infant. (A copy of this form is in the Annex.)

Some of what you already learned in managing sick children age 2 months up to 5 years is useful for young infants. This module will focus on new information and skills that you need to manage young infants.

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This module will describe the following tasks and allow you to practice some of them (some will be practiced in the clinic):

- \* assessing and classifying a young infant for possible bacterial infection
- \* assessing and classifying a young infant with diarrhoea
- \* checking for a feeding problem or low weight, assessing breastfeeding and classifying feeding
- \* treating a young infant with oral or intramuscular antibiotics
- \* giving fluid for treatment of diarrhoea
- \* teaching the mother to treat local infections at home
- \* teaching correct positioning and attachment for breastfeeding

For information on training in managing sick newborns and labour and delivery, contact the Family Health Division, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Newborns may be suffering from asphyxia, sepsis from premature ruptured membranes or other intrauterine infection, or birth trauma. Or they may have trouble breathing due to immature lungs. Jaundice also requires special management in the first week of life. For all these reasons, management of a sick newborn is somewhat different from caring for a young infant age 1 week up to 2 months.

\* advising the mother how to give home care for the young infant

# 1.0 ASSESS AND CLASSIFY THE SICK YOUNG INFANT

Ask the mother what the young infant's problems are. Determine if this is an initial or follow-up visit for these problems. If this is a follow-up visit, you should manage the infant according to the special instructions for a follow-up visit. These special instructions are in the follow-up boxes at the bottom of the *YOUNG INFANT* chart. They are taught in the module *Follow-up*.

If it is an initial visit, follow the sequence of steps on the chart. This section teaches the steps to assess and classify a sick young infant at an initial visit:

- \* Check for signs of possible bacterial infection. Then classify the young infant based on the signs found.
- \* Ask about diarrhoea. If the infant has diarrhoea, assess the related signs. Classify the young infant for dehydration. Also classify for persistent diarrhoea and dysentery if present.
- \* Check for feeding problem or low weight. This may include assessing breastfeeding. Then classify feeding.
- \* Check the young infant's immunization status.
- \* Assess any other problems.

If you find a reason that a young infant needs urgent referral, you should continue the assessment. However, skip the breastfeeding assessment because it can take some time.

## 1.1 CHECK THE YOUNG INFANT FOR POSSIBLE BACTERIAL INFECTION

This assessment step is done for *every* sick young infant. In this step you are looking for signs of bacterial infection, especially a serious infection. A young infant can become sick and die *very quickly* from serious bacterial infections such as pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis.

It is important to assess the signs in the order on the chart, and to keep the young infant

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