

Nine countries commit to halve maternal and newborn deaths in health facilities

New WHO and UNICEF-supported network to improve care for mothers and babies

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Today, 9 countries – Bangladesh, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda – committed to halving preventable deaths of pregnant women and newborns in their health facilities within the next 5 years.



UNICEF/Pirozzi

Through a new Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, supported by WHO, UNICEF and other partners, the countries will work to improve the quality of care mothers and babies receive in their health facilities.

This Network aims to strengthen national efforts to end preventable deaths by 2030, as envisioned by the Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health. Countries will do that for example, by strengthening capacity and motivation of health professional to plan and manage quality improvement, improving data collection and increasing access to medicines, supplies, equipment and clean water.

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Through a global learning platform, the Quality of Care Network will build a community of health practitioners from the facility level and up to develop evidence-based, yet context-specific, strategies to improve quality of care, harvest implementation ideas, and collect information and experiences about what is working.

Ending preventable deaths

The period around childbirth is the most critical for saving mothers and newborns, and preventing stillbirths. Every year, worldwide, 303 000 women die during pregnancy and

childbirth, 2.7 million babies die during the first 28 days of life and 2.6 million babies are stillborn. Most of these deaths could be prevented with quality care during pregnancy and childbirth.

However, the provision of care is uneven within and between countries, and often fails to respect the rights and dignity of those who seek it.

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New quality of care standards

Utilizing WHO’s *Standards for improving quality of maternal and newborn care in health facilities*, published in 2016, countries within the Network will work to improve both the provision of, and patients’ experience of health care. The eight new standards provide a quality of care framework which will help countries ensure their services are safe, effective, timely, efficient, equitable and people-centred.

Under WHO standards, the health facilities should have competent and motivated health professionals and the availability of essential resources, such as clean water, medicines, equipment, supplies and proper waste management. They also need functional referral systems between levels of care, access to functioning ambulances for emergency transportation, and information systems that collect adequate patient records, register births and deaths, and facilitate routine audits.

Additionally, the standards help countries ensure no woman or newborn is subjected to unnecessary or harmful practices during labour, childbirth or the early postnatal period. It ensures all patients are given privacy and that their confidentiality is respected.

Countries leading the way

The first 9 countries in the Network have committed to identifying the actions they will take to improve quality of care and will work with partners to deliver the vision of quality that encompasses values of equity and dignity.

To achieve this, governments will build and strengthen their national institutions, identify quality of care focal points at all levels of the health system, accelerate and sustain the implementation of quality-of-care improvement packages for mothers, newborns and children, and work with all groups involved to facilitate learning, knowledge sharing and accountability.

Source: [http://www.who.int/maternal child adolescent/news events/news/quality-of-care-network/en/?utm_source=WHO+List&utm_campaign=6fa4fd583d-EMAIL CAMPAIGN 2017 01 18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0 823e9e35c1-6fa4fd583d-266618061](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/news_events/news/quality-of-care-network/en/?utm_source=WHO+List&utm_campaign=6fa4fd583d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_01_18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_823e9e35c1-6fa4fd583d-266618061)