Welcome to the 21st Issue of Our Newsletter

Welcome to the 21st Edition of our Mother and Child Health Newsletter. If you have any comments about this or any other issues, please feel free to contact the Project at etmnch@ualberta.ca or contact our editor Meseret at mesidesta@gmail.com.

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In this issue we include updates from the workshops, technical guidelines, and some recent publications and news. Our goal is to keep you informed on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Care in Ethiopia, in Africa and beyond.

Do you have an idea or a success story to share? Maybe you’ve heard of an upcoming event? Did you just find a solution you’d like to suggest to others? Send us your ideas so we can learn from each other!

Healthy Weight Gain during Pregnancy

Research has shown that pregnant women can improve their health and even reduce their risk of complications during childbirth by maintaining a healthy weight through diet and exercise. Results suggest that too much weight during pregnancy increases the risk of gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, large babies, and delivery by Caesarean section. Furthermore, we know that newborns with large birth weights are at risk of childhood obesity.

The study found that interventions involving low sugar diets, exercise only, or diet and exercise combined, all led to similar reductions in the number of women gaining excessive weight. Exercise interventions were mainly of moderate intensity and included various individual or group activities such as walking, aerobics, Pilates and dance. Researchers advise that pregnant women consult their health care provider before beginning a new exercise or diet program. For more information on the study, please see:

New Lead on Male Contraceptive

Groundbreaking reproductive research conducted by the Center for Research in Contraceptive and Reproductive Health at the University of Virginia has identified key molecular events that could...
Quote of the Week

Speak tenderly to them. Let there be kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in the warmth of our greeting. Always have a cheerful smile. Don’t only give your care, but give your heart as well. ~ Mother Teresa

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Launch of New Countdown Case Study on RMNCH in Ethiopia

This report documents the success stories of the Ethiopian government’s efforts to reduce under 5 mortality, identifies keys to success and outlines remaining gaps that exist with respect to improving child health outcomes. The report suggests that Ethiopia has substantially increased access to and utilization of essential health care services for children. Further nutritional status of children under 5 has improved resulting in a reduction in the number of children who are stunted. The Health Extension Programme is identified as a strategy that brought many essential health services to rural communities and it is credited with much of the observed reductions in under five mortality. Challenges that remain include tackling the inequality that exists between the health outcomes of children living in urban and rural areas and increasing efforts to reduce the number of neonatal deaths as it is estimated that 41% of all deaths under five are among neonates. More information available in the full document here.

More Women Reel under Effects of Cervical Cancer

In Uganda, cervical cancer beats breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer deaths in women, killing about 2,275 women annually. “Cancer of the cervix was traditionally a disease for older women, above 40 years, but nowadays, younger women are being diagnosed with the disease because of early sexual debut,” says Dr Judith Ajeani, consultant obstetrician and gynecologist. Dr. Ajeani also says that cervical cancer is common among women who have multiple sexual partners.

The increase in the number of deaths due to cervical cancer is observed not just in Uganda, but around the world. According to WHO, there are an estimated 530,000 new cases of the disease each year, leading to at least 270,000 deaths, most of them in developing countries. Of the 20 countries with the highest incidence worldwide, 16 are African, including Uganda. Read more here.

True Costs of Maternal Death

The sudden death of a woman from largely preventable causes during pregnancy or childbirth is a terrible injustice that comes at a very high cost. Without a mother’s care, newborns are far less likely to survive their first year of life and older children often have to drop out of school to help with household chores. Read more here.
household responsibilities. Girls who lose their mother are also more likely to become pregnant or marry at a younger age, leading to higher maternal and neonatal mortality.

The report found in the link below is the first of its kind and traces the linkages between maternal death and the resulting impacts that this has on children. The report quantifies these impacts and researchers say that it will be particularly useful for advocates, government officials and donors as it will help them understand the implications of inaction on maternal death. Read more here:


Midwives: Heroes when it’s a Live Birth, Villains When its Death

Too often midwives are blamed when a mother dies. In many countries, this is leading to a decrease in the number of trained midwives as many individuals report becoming nurses since the level of responsibility is different, especially during the delivery period. Trained midwives are very important for reducing maternal and newborn mortality, so what can we do about this? Do you think that midwives support each other enough in the workplace? How can we make midwives feel more appreciated and respected?


WHO recommends involving men in maternal & newborn health

The World Health Organization has declared the involvement of men in maternal and newborn health needs as a priority area of focus moving forward. Men are recognized as the gatekeepers and decision-makers mediating access to health services, thus, their involvement in health promotion efforts is crucial. Possible methods for engaging men in maternal and newborn health include mass media campaigns, home visits and increasing counseling services. WHO is also recommending that further research is conducted in this area, particularly as it relates to family approaches that consider the relationship dynamics of the household and their impact on maternal and newborn health.

Click here to learn more and to read about the other recommendations made by the WHO about health promotion interventions for maternal and newborn health.

Resources

- Helping Babies Breathe: Lessons learned guiding the way forward - new report
- Brief History of Midwives and Why Midwives are Important Today
- Respectful maternal and newborn care: building a common agenda
- Barriers and Enablers of Kangaroo Mother Care Practice: A Systematic Review
- How do we talk about mental illness in pregnancy?
- Access to emergency obstetric surgery has huge potential benefits in preventing mortality & disability
- Why South Sudan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world?
Registration for Woman Deliver Conference 2016 Now Open

Women Deliver’s 4th Global Conference, taking place 16-19 May 2016, will be the largest gathering on girls’ and women’s health and rights in the last decade and one of the first major global conferences following the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Invitation for YOUR Contribution

We would like to invite all Senior Midwives Tutors to share your Dreams for overall maternal and newborn health. We will share it in the next issue. Please submit your Dream directly to Meseret Desta Haileyesus. It’s wonderful to see your Dreams from all over our Senior Midwives Tutors united for mothers and their babies. Keep the Dreams coming!