Welcome to the 23rd Issue of Our Newsletter

Welcome to the 23rd 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!

Did you know that this is World Breastfeeding Week?

Every year, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated from August 1 to 7 across more than 170 countries to encourage breastfeeding and improve the health of babies. The WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding starting from birth until babies are six months old, in order to provide infants with the nutrients that they need for optimal development.

The World Health Assembly has set a global target of increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates for children under six months of age to at least 50% by 2025 (current rates are estimated at 38%).

The theme of this year’s World Breastfeeding Week is, ‘Breastfeeding at Work’. There are approximately 830 million working women in the world and the majority do not benefit from workplace policies that support nursing mothers. In addition, women who work in the informal sector or in seasonal or part-time employment – many who are poor women or women living in low income countries - are likely to face even greater barriers to continued breastfeeding.

This World Breastfeeding Week, calls for concerted global action to support women to combine breastfeeding and work. Whether a woman is working in the formal, non-formal or home setting, it is necessary that she is empowered in claiming her and her baby’s right to breastfeed.

To read more about the WHO’s campaign, please click here:
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/meetings/2015/world-breastfeeding-week/en/
As a part of the Maternal Heroes Summer Series, Toyin Sarakim, Founder of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa, discusses her views on global maternal health. In the article, Sarakim shares her belief that midwives are crucial to achieving substantial improvements in maternal health. Skilled midwives not only provide expert care that ensures the survival of mothers and newborns, but they also empower women at a time when their health is at its most vulnerable. Sarakim argues that an empowered woman is a health-seeking woman for herself, her family and her community. The article further discusses that midwives should be placed at the center of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) that are related to reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health. This series of commentaries will run in the Huffington Post leading up to the Global Maternal Newborn Health Conference that will be held in Mexico City from October 18-21, 2015.


Malawi Achieves MDG4!

WHO and UNICEF have recognized the government of Malawi for their efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4. Malawi is the first of its neighboring countries to attain Goal 4, which is aimed at reducing under-5 mortality rates by two thirds from 1990 and 2015. Malawi’s success is largely attributed to the government’s early adoption of international policies and programs, including the distribution of insecticide treated bed nets, vaccination, and treatment of childhood diarrhea, pneumonia and malaria. Although Malawi has made significant progress in improving child survival rates, there is still a lot of work to do to improve newborn survival rates.


HIV Transmission from Mother to Child Nearly Eliminated in Canada

According to findings of the Canadian Perinatal HIV Surveillance Program, Canada has virtually eliminated the incidence of mothers passing HIV to their infants at birth. In 2014, only a single case of the virus being passed down from mother to child was reported, meeting the United Nation’s criteria for eliminating the spread of the virus through childbirth (less than two percent transmission rate). The Program also reported that 97% of expecting mothers with HIV in Canada had received antiretroviral therapy during their pregnancy, virtually eliminating the risk of transmission to unborn babies.


Natural Breech Birth is Low Risk for Babies

A large scale research study has found that the natural breech births are a low risk for babies. Co-author Yifru Berhan, professor of Obstetrics of Gynaecology at Hawassa University in Ethiopia reports: ‘Our results show that the relative risk of perinatal mortality and morbidity was between two and five times higher in planned vaginal breech delivery compared to planned caesarean section birth. However, the absolute risks were very small.’ While the majority of babies are born head first, breech babies are born feet first and are most often delivered by caesarean section. These new findings may spark conversation in the medical community related to standards of care for breech
Predicting Women at Risk of Pre-Eclampsia

A new study published in BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has found that certain biomarkers in the blood of pregnant women can be used to predict women who are at risk of pre-eclampsia. Pre-eclampsia is a combination of raised blood pressure (hypertension) and protein in the urine (proteinuria) and usually has mild effects on pregnancy. In some cases, however, pre-eclampsia can affect the mother, causing kidney damage, liver damage and, in severe cases, seizures and coma. The study was designed to address the need to find a reliable way to screen women that are at risk for pre-eclampsia and found that biomarkers, including serum levels of asymmetric dimethylarginie (ADMA) and homocysteine (Hcy), are raised in women who develop pre-eclampsia. Further research is needed in this area. Read more here: http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/07/150722101815.htm

New Baby? Who Helps You Learn About Infant Care?

A study has found that, in the United States, many new mothers do not receive advice from physicians on aspects of infant care such as sleep position, breastfeeding, immunization and pacifier use. The study authors surveyed a nationally representative sample of more than 1,000 new mothers and asked mothers about infant care advice they received from doctors, nurses, family members and the news media. Roughly 20 percent of mothers reported that they did not receive advice from their doctors, despite findings from earlier studies that demonstrate new mothers listen to their physicians. One study author shared that, from a public health perspective, we now see that there is a real opportunity to engage families and the media to promote infant health. Read more http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/07/150727092533.htm

Researchers Discover Surprising Link between Chronic Stress, Preterm Birth

Excessive stress can result in preterm birth, which has been shown to affect a person's health throughout their life, surprising new research shows. The World Health Organization estimates 15 million babies are born preterm each year. It is the leading cause of death for children under the age of five, and babies who survive are at much higher risk of developing a number of health conditions including chronic lung disease, cardiovascular disease and metabolic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes. Study authors hope to build upon this research in order to predict which women will be at risk of pre-term birth and develop early interventions to minimize these risks. Read more here http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/07/150716101515.htm
How do we improve global maternal health?
A tale of a desperate Ethiopian midwife
Malaria in pregnancy: challenges for control and the need for urgent action
Perceptions of Community Members and Healthcare Workers on Male Involvement in Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission Services in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa
The Health Extension Program and Its Association with Change in Utilization of Selected Maternal Health Services in Tigray Region, Ethiopia: A Segmented Linear Regression Analysis
Factors associated with four or more antenatal care services among pregnant women: a cross-sectional survey in eight South Central Coast provinces of Vietnam
WHO's new guideline, "Health worker roles in providing safe abortion care and post-abortion contraception"

Announcement

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!