

REDUCING MATERNAL AND NEONATAL MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY IN THE GAMBIA

THE 3 DELAYS

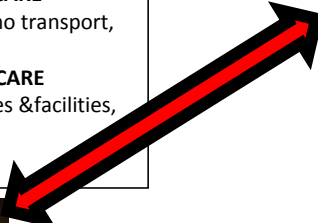
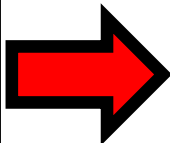
- Over half a million women die in pregnancy & childbirth each year¹
- The developing world accounts for 99% of those deaths.
- 50% of the deaths occur in Africa¹
- Gambia – Africa's smallest country has high maternal and neonatal mortality rates²
- 3 main factors influence this³:
 - DELAY IN DECISION TO SEEK CARE**
eg. patient not recognising danger signs
 - DELAY IN REACHING CARE**
eg. poor roads, poor/no transport, river crossings.
 - DELAY IN RECEIVING CARE**
eg. inadequate supplies & facilities, lack of trained staff.



PARTNERSHIP

Since 2007 collaboration between the Gambian Department of State for Health, the World Health Organisation, Maternal and Child Health Advocacy International⁴ and the UK Advanced Life Support Group⁵ has led to many initiatives to reduce mortality / morbidity rates in women & children :

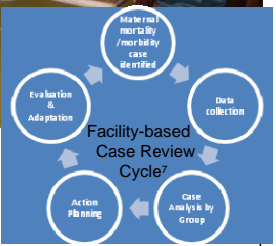
- Training programmes for clinical staff (including TBAs⁶) re: emergency care for maternity & children
- Educational Resources eg. books, CDs, pictorial guides
- Renovation of hospitals
- Provision of essential resources
- Flying Squads / Operating Theatres



CASE MEETINGS

Regular maternity case review meetings have been started at 3 of the Major Health Centres in the Gambia. These are qualitative, in-depth investigations of the causes of and circumstances surrounding maternal deaths/morbidity.⁷ Benefits of these meetings include⁷:

- Contribute to reduced mortality / morbidity levels
- Identifying where improvements needed
- Provide a teaching opportunity for staff
- Help improve staff performance & morale



THE AIM

Success is healthy mothers and children, happy families and motivated, skilled staff. There is no room for any complacency:

- Millennium Development Goal 5 to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters between 1990 & 2015 is highly unlikely to be achieved⁸
- Endeavours like these to build better functioning health systems must continue.



'one preventable maternal death is too many; hundreds of thousands are simply unacceptable – this is the 21st century.'

Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, April 2010

References

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3. Thaddeus S, Maine D : Too far to walk: maternal mortality in context. Soc Sci Med 1994 38 (8) : 1091-110
4. Maternal and Child Health Advocacy International. www.mcai.org.uk
5. Advanced Life Support Group www.alsg.org
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