

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MATERNAL HEALTH

(Under the Chairmanship of Secretary Health, Government of Pakistan)

NCMH NEWSLETTER

March 1999



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From The President

It is with a sense of great responsibility that I write these lines for the first newsletter of NCMH which has been given the task of reducing the continuing high maternal mortality and morbidity in Pakistan. The challenge is enormous. The determinants of maternal deaths and disabilities are diverse. Improving health services alone will not suffice. Much more is required, particularly on three fronts:

- Sensitising the community to the need for proper care and vigilance during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Appropriate training of relevant health care providers.
- Upgrading the standards of maternal health care being provided both in the public and the private sector.

There exist isolated examples of sincere efforts of individuals/small groups, for improvement and of some island of success, but that is not enough. There is no strategy or planned action at the provincial or the national levels. There is very little co-operation and collaboration between the different individuals/agencies. Hence the activities are not coordinated. The available information is sketchy. NCMH is striving to remedy the situation and is working with various partners initially focusing on advocacy of the seriousness of the situation to reach the policy makers, health professionals and the public.

To provide a database for ready reference, a directory is being prepared of maternity services outlets and of organisations and individuals working on women's health issues in Sindh. The newsletter includes information about some of NCMH's work.

Technical expertise is NCMH's strength. I, on behalf of the committee, offer our services to all those who wish to avail them.

Sadiqua N. Jafrey



Sensitizing the Politicians: Bagum Tehmina Daultana, Minister of State for Women's Affairs, inaugurated a seminar on Safe Motherhood in Lahore. (Page 5)



Reaching the Community (details on pages 3, 4, 7)



Let us all work together to convince our government and the politicians of the magnitude of the problem and seek their sustained support to meet the immense challenge before us.

President NCMH

About NCMH

Established in 1994 by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan under the Chairmanship of the Federal Secretary of Health, and a Core Committee which comprised three members: two of these, were obstetricians and the third, a nurse-educator, midwife and public health scientist. A physician nominated by the Chairman acts as liaison between MOH and NCMH.

- Creating awareness among the public and the service providers regarding high maternal mortality in Pakistan.
- Providing technical guidance for the development and implementation of realistic and replicable "Demonstration Projects" for maximum utilisation of resources as well as for training and research activities.



Ensuring quality: Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove, Canadian High Commissioner (centre) visited Lady Dufferin Hospital to review the progress of the project funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). NCMH provides technical assistance to this project as well as oversees its implementation.

The Core Committee co-opted 12 members for multidisciplinary and geographical representation from the public and the private sector. This includes MCH Directors of all the provinces, a paediatrician, a demographer, a community health specialist, a public health scientist and 4 obstetricians/gynaecologists.

All NCMH members are working in a voluntary capacity. (Their names are on page 6)

The terms of reference of NCMH include:

- Ensuring co-ordination of the efforts of various sectors promoting Safe Motherhood.

- Assisting the government both at the federal and the provincial levels in policy making and planning; implementation and monitoring of the programmes and activities directed towards improving maternal health.

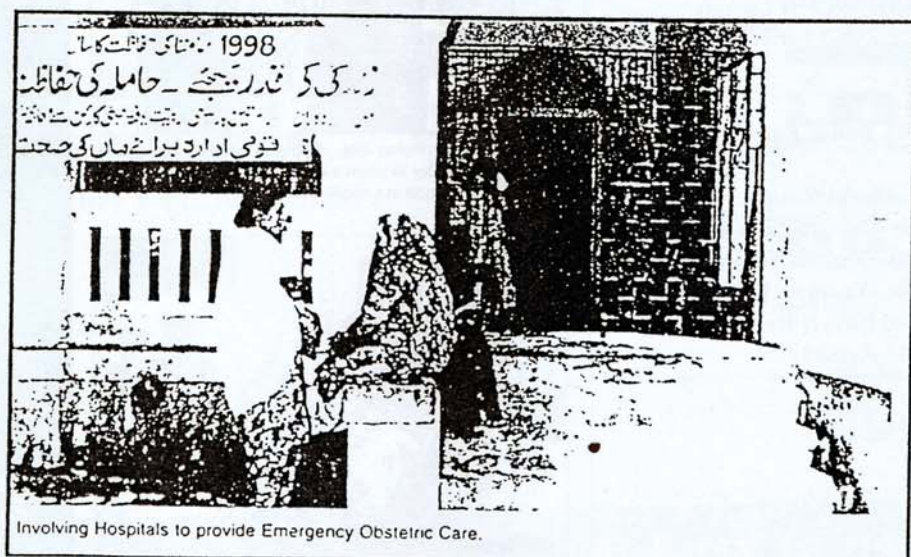
- Generating human and financial resources for Committee's activities.

SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES OF NCMH BETWEEN 1994-1998

For achieving its objectives the approaches used have been:

- Developed a network of partners which includes Officials of the Ministry of Health and Provincial Health Directorates, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Pakistan (SOGP), Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Colleges of Family Medicine, Maternity and Child Welfare Association (MCWA), and various other NGOs to initiate action for Safe Motherhood.
- Organised and or collaborated with other partners for seminars, workshops, professional meetings which included: "Strategic Planning for

NCMH believes that working alone will have very little impact. They have developed a network of partner organizations



Involving Hospitals to provide Emergency Obstetric Care.



Counseling mothers in small groups. A Lady Health Visitor is conducting a health education session on importance of care during pregnancy.

Safe Motherhood", and two follow up meetings (Karachi, September 1995, May and December 1996); "Contraceptive Technology Update Workshop" (Karachi, March 1996); National Conference on Reproductive Health and AIDS in Pakistan (Peshawar, December 1996); Seminars on Maternal Health and Safe Motherhood and on "Maternal Health in Sind" (Karachi, October 1997 and September 1998.)

- Produced Urdu Film "Mamta Ki Hifazat" (with English subtitles) for Community Education.
- Provided technical assistance to the Department of Community Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University for film "Basic life-saving skills in obstetrics at the primary health care level", for the education of health care providers.

Commemorated 1998 as SAFE MOTHERHOOD YEAR

Nationwide activities were organized around WHO's Global Theme for 1998 which was "Pregnancy is Special: Let's Make it Safe". Activities included:

- Nationwide seminars, radio talks, TV programmes and press releases and conferences.
- Nationwide distribution of a thematic poster in Urdu, Sindhi, and Pushto.

- Health camps by doctors and LHV's all over Pakistan for antenatal care.
- Active participation in first ever National meeting on Midwifery.



Educating the Health Care Providers. NCMH President Dr. Saqqa Jafrey speaking to a group of doctors, nurses and midwives in Peshawar.

Maternal mortality in Pakistan

Dr. Shahida Zaidi

All issues of the Newsletter will include some statistics on maternal mortality from different parts of the country and in their analysis (provided information is made available to NCMH upon request).

This is to keep reminding us of the stark reality of high maternal mortality and the need for taking measures to reduce these preventable deaths.

Did you know?

200 years ago Sweden was the first country which succeeded in reducing MMR by utilising properly trained midwives.

Health Care Providers need to improve their Knowledge and Skills for providing EOC.

A survey conducted in 1997 revealed that:

- 40% were unable to list important high-risk conditions in pregnancy and child-birth.
- 63% could not diagnose puerperal sepsis in a given case study.
- Satisfactory responses of health care providers were directly proportionate to years of experience up to 10 years but dropped lower when experience was more than 10 years.
- More than 30% of all the respondents lacked some of the necessary skills needed for providing obstetric care.

Sandeman Hospital, Quetta: A Four Year Review 1991 - 1994

(By Professor Shahnaz Naseer Baloch)

Total Deliveries	20137
Maternal Deaths	128
Maternal Mortality Ratio	630

Women and Children Hospital, Abbottabad 1997

(By Professor Nazakat Begum)

Total Deliveries	1204
Live Births	1165
Maternal Deaths	4
Maternal Mortality Ratio	343

Ob/Gyn Unit 3 Civil Hospital Karachi 1998

(By Prof. Haleema Hashmi)

Total Deliveries	1080
Live Births	946
Maternal Deaths	13
Maternal Mortality Ratio	1370

Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre 1997

(By Professor Hasan Fatima)

Total Deliveries	3306
Total Live Births	3062
Maternal Deaths	36
Maternal Mortality Ratio	1176

Lady Dufferin Hospital Karachi 1997

(By Dr Kausar Nazir)

Total Deliveries	3771
Total Live Births	3765
Maternal Deaths	4
Maternal Mortality Ratio	106

Ziauddin Hospital Karachi 1997

(By Dr. Rubina Idrees Siddiqui)

Total Deliveries	2483
Total Live Births	2423
Maternal Deaths	2
Maternal Mortality Ratio	83

Data about causes of maternal death as given by the above hospitals

Cause Number

Haemorrhage	11
Sepsis	12
Obstructed Labour	1
Eclampsia	11
Others	26

(Information NA for 128 deaths)

"Others" include indirect as well as medical causes of maternal deaths.

Causes of maternal deaths are not known for 128 deaths hence calculation of MMR and analysis of the data is not possible.

Total number of maternal deaths from the above data from hospitals only is 189. It is neither complete nor indicative or rep-

resentative of the real situation in the country. Only one set of data from the community was made available by Dr. Husna Memon, Coordinator Prime Minister's Programme for PHC and Family Planning, Sindh, which reveals vast difference between the official figures from the Director General Health (DGH) and those collected from communities by the Lady Health workers.

Year	From DGH Office	From the Community
1997	57	2438
1998		937

Historically, it was the well trained midwives who reduced MMR in European countries BEFORE the advent of antibiotics, blood transfusion and caesarean section.

We need more midwives

There is a dire need in our country for more trained personnel to provide care during the entire maternity cycle. Obstetricians cannot fill this gap. They are expensive to train, and prefer to work in cities. Moreover it is neither necessary nor possible to have a doctor to manage a normal pregnancy and childbirth. Training the practising Trained Birth Attendant (TBAs) has not appreciably improved the situation. The answer therefore lies in training more professional midwives.

Training midwives is less daunting a task than doubling the number of medical colleges in the country, as was done by the government in the 1970s. It needs provision of support to public sector hospitals and encouragement to private hospitals and maternity homes. The requirements of the Pakistan Nursing Council, for starting a midwifery school include: 20 maternity beds and an admission of at least 200 maternity cases in a year; a Resident Medical Officer preferably an obstetrician; one head nurse and 6 charge nurses for the ward, 2 head nurses and 6 charge nurses for the labour room, and 2 charge nurses for each operation theatre.



Reaching the Community A group of women attending a Question & Answer session about Women's Health in Hyderabad

any Hospitals meet these pre-requisites. With some additional input, they can organise a school of midwifery for which guidance can be provided to them by NCMH, Maternity and Child Welfare Association of Pakistan, Pakistan Nursing Council, Provincial Directorates of Nursing or any existing school of midwifery in their town.

Information Education and Communication (IEC) Materials available with NCMH

NCMH in its role of advocacy is committed to the issue of high maternal mortality and morbidity and making Pakistanis at all levels aware of this preventable tragedy i.e. politicians, policy makers, administrators, health care providers, media professionals and community at large

For this purpose the following IEC materials have been developed by NCMH and other agencies:

For the Community

- Banners in Urdu and posters in Urdu, Sindhi, and Pushto with the slogan "Value Life. Look after the Pregnant Woman". Posters have 3 short messages conveying the importance of Ante-natal care:
- Video film "Mamta-ki-Hifazat" in Urdu with English subtitles (NCMH)
- Posters on antenatal care and four causes of maternal death. (SMP, CHS Department, AKU)
- Antenatal card and antenatal care booklet. (SMP, CHS Department, AKU)

For the Health Care Providers

- Video film "Mamta-ki-Hifazat", highlighting Haemorrhage and Eclampsia. (NCMH)
- Video film "Selected Basic Skills For Prevention & Management of Obstetric Complication", and
- Training Manual on "Management & Prevention of Obstetric Complications at Primary Care



Creating Awareness: Women watching the film 'Mamta Ki Hifazat' in one of the MCH Centres in Karachi.

Level" (SMP, CHS Department AKU)

Do you know?
Every 20 minutes a
woman dies in Pakistan
due to causes related to
pregnancy and childbirth.

Provincial Activities

NCMH in Punjab

In 1998:
Health Camp at Manawah
Radio Talk: From Lahore
Press Coverage

Seminar on Reproductive Health in Fatima Memorial Hospital, Lahore.

The seminar on Reproductive Health was organised in Lahore on 26 December 1998. The Chief Guest was Begum Tehmina Daultana, Minister of State for Women's Development, Social Welfare and Special Education. Mr Ismail Qureshi, Secretary Health Punjab, Mr. Afzal Hashmi D.G Health Punjab, Ex-judge Begum Nasira Iqbal, Trustee of

**Midwives are the linchpins of
maternity services in many devel-
oped and most developing coun-
tries. Well trained midwives are, in
their own right, specialists of nor-
mal obstetrics.**

Fatima Memorial Hospital were among the distinguished guests. The 250 participants included doctors and other health professionals. Dr. Sadiqua Jafarey, President NCMH was the Keynote Speaker.

The film "Mamta Ki Hifazat" was launched on the occasion by the Chief Guest, who in her inaugural address commended the efforts of NCMH. The technical session included the following presentations:

"Comparative analysis of Booked versus Unbooked Cases in Two Large Hospitals of Lahore": Prof. Dr. Tasleem Malik.

"Socio-cultural Factors Influencing Maternal Health in Punjab": Dr. Riffat Ashraf.

"STD in Reproductive Period in Punjab": Dr. Shahina Manzoor.

"Role of Family Physicians in Promoting Reproductive Health": Dr. Naseer Nazmani.

"Role of Family Physicians in Promoting Reproductive Health": Dr. Bashir A. Malik

NCMH in Balochistan

In 1998:

Press Conference

A press conference was called in Quetta. The media representatives were provided information about Safe Motherhood through a press release and discussions with the Principal, Public Health School and DD Health/ MCH services.

Co-opted Members of NCMH

The Core Committee co-opted the following members who have multi-disciplinary and geographical representations from the public and the private sector:

Dr. Nasim Iftikhar	(Ex-Officio)	Director Reproductive Health, NWFP
Dr. Shaheena Manzoor	(Ex-Officio)	Director MCH, Punjab
Dr. Salma Bozdar	(Ex-Officio)	Director MCH, Sindh
Dr. Talat Durrani	(Ex-Officio)	Deputy Director MCH, Balochistan
Dr. Husna Memon		Coordinator PM's Programme, Sindh
Prof. Aftab Munir		Ex-Professor, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Liaquat Medical College, Jamshoro, Sindh
Dr. Mohammed Tufail		Paediatrician and Trainer, Paediatrics Society of Pakistan, Peshawar (NWFP)
Dr. Zeba Sathar		Demographer, Population Council, Islamabad
Dr. Fariyal Fikree		Department of Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University, Karachi
Prof. Taslim Malik		Ex-Professor, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, King Edward Medical College, Lahore (She replaced the Late Prof. Altaf Bashir)
Dr. Talat Rizvi		Public Health Scientist, Ministry of Health
Dr. Sher Shah		Medical Superintendent, Sobhraj Maternity Hospital, Karachi



(N.C.M.H) in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Programme for Family Planning and Primary Health Care, World Food Programme and Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Sindh celebrated Safe Motherhood week between 30 March and April 17 1998.

The activities included the opening of a Safe Motherhood Clinic at Lions Medical Complex, Hyderabad. Health talks on Safe Motherhood were given by Professor Aftab Munir, D.G Health Dr. F.M. Memon, Provincial Co-ordinator, Prime Minister Programme Dr. Husna J. Memon and President Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Sindh. Dr N.M Memon.

Antenatal check-up of pregnant women was carried out. They were also told about the importance of regular antenatal check up and complications of pregnancy. At the end of the programme pregnant and lactating women were given vegetable oil and tablets of Iron and Folic Acid courtesy of WFP and PMP for FP and PHC Sindh.

One Day Seminar at Umerkot

Meetings of Health Care Providers

Two meetings of health care providers were held, one in Kalat and one in Khuzdar with a total of 37 participants.

Resource person addressed the group on the issue of Safe Motherhood. There were group discussions and question and answer sessions.

Display of Safe Motherhood Posters

The Safe Motherhood posters were used in meetings of service providers and at service points.

Many institutions/organisations partici-

pated in Safe Motherhood Activities.

NCMH in Sindh

In 1998:
National Committee on Maternal Health

Have you any suggestions to make, or information that you would like to share? Please write to:

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NCMH in NWFP

In 1998:

Provincial seminar for media
and service providers

The seminar was attended by Haji
Mohammed Adeel Sahib, Deputy
Speaker NWFP Assembly, Dr. Abdul



Majeed, President Pakistan Medical
Association (PMA) Dr. Mohammed
Aslam, President College of Family
Medicine and Dr. Ghulam Mohiuddin.
The President National Committee on
Maternal Health (N.C.M.H) Dr. Sadiqua
Jafrey and two members Dr. Shereen
Bhutta and Dr. Faryal Fikri from Karachi
also attended the seminar.



Group Counselling in the home of a pregnant
woman (Lady Dufferin Hospital's CIDA project).

MAGNESIUM SULPHATE FOR ECLAMPSIA

UNICEF has supplied Injection Magnesium Sulphate for
use in Eclamptic patients. The injections and protocol for
use are available from the office of National Committee on
Maternal Health and Sobhraj Maternity Hospital, Karachi.

Those interested can contact either NCMH,
Phones: 5870577 and 5857397 Monday, through Friday
9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. or

Dr. Sher Shah Syed at Sobhraj Maternity Hospital
Phones: 211037 and 2638630.



Using opportunity for health education: Dr. Setna (standing 2nd from left) addressing women in the outpatient
department of Lady Dufferin Hospital Karachi.

The seminar was addressed by Deputy
Speaker NWFP assembly who regretted
the poor female literacy rate which con-
tributed to ignorance and ill health. Other
speakers included Dr. Saeed-ul-Majeed
President, College of Family Medicine
and Dr. Sadiqua Jafrey, President
National Committee on Maternal Health.
They gave details of the MMR in
Pakistan and the causes responsible for

poor maternal health status which were
multi-dimensional, social, economic,
cultural and medical.

Dr. Faryal Fikree and Dr. Tufail
Mohammed also addressed the gather-
ing. The scientific session was chaired by
Prof. Mumtaz Farooq Khattak.

Meetings of Service Providers were held
in Peshawar and Swat also.

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Pakistan' on the envelope.



Spacing between children is very important

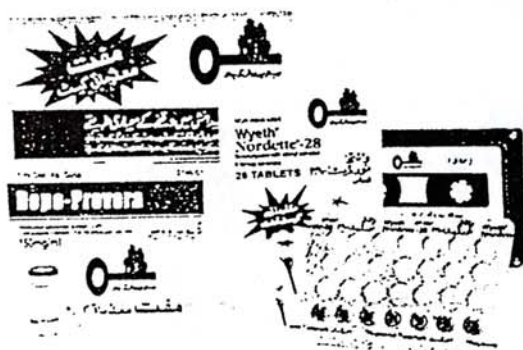


According to Dr. Kaleem Butt, General Secretary of Pakistan Medical Association (Central), spacing of at least 3 years between children is important because:

- Both mother and child maintain good health.
- Each child gets complete parental attention.
- A healthy mother ensures her family's health and well-being.



According to the Pakistan Medical Association, Key contraceptive products and information cassette are effective in ensuring birth spacing and better maternal and child health.



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