



# Newsletter

December 2019

**NCMNH**  
National Committee for Maternal  
Health

## Welcome to Our Bi – annual Newsletter

This edition provides an overview of NCMNH's participation in activities in 2019 including some impressive achievements and activities on Post Pregnancy Family Planning (PPFP). It also features a write up on recognizing the role of Midwives in providing safe maternity care.

## 25 Years of NCMNH

celebrating achievements -  
getting ready for new challenges

### Inside this Issue:

- Why Family Planning?
- Recapitulation of PPFP Intervention Activities
- Highlights of Naya Qadam Project Activities
- Write up on first Regional Midwifery Summit
- First Qualified Midwife
- **Chief Editor:** Mrs .Imtiaz Kamal
- **Guest Editor:** Dr. Arjumand Rabbani

### Editorial Board

- Ms. Maliha Noor
- Dr. Aleya Ali
- Dr. Marium Waqas

*Committed to Saving Lives of  
Mothers & Newborns*



## Editorial

### Why Family Planning?

Pakistan is a reasonably safe country to “live in”, but definitely not to be “born in” with the still birth rate being 43 /1000 and neonatal rate of 42/1000. A lot of women lose their lives while giving life. Maternal Mortality Ratio being 140/100,000 live births (2017 estimates—World Bank)

Globally, Family planning (FP) is recognized as a key lifesaving intervention for mothers and their children (WHO).

A positive contraceptive behavior can reduce more than 30% maternal deaths and 10% of child mortality, if pregnancies are spaced 2 years apart. Pakistan with a population growth rate of 2.4% and low contraception prevalence (34%) results in high rates of unintended pregnancies. Nearly half of all pregnancies (46%) in Pakistan are unintended. More than half of those end in induced abortions. Complications of unsafe abortion are not only a heavy burden on the health system but also one of the major causes of maternal mortality and morbidity.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
- Family planning is one of the 10 great health achievements of the twentieth century

The median duration of insusceptibility to pregnancy after child birth in Pakistan is 4 months (PDHS 2017-18). The immediate implication of this is that it increases chances of pregnancy. The fact is that 32% women with two living children do not desire another child for two or more years but are not using any method of contraception.

Post Pregnancy Family Planning (PPFP) is an integrated part of existing maternal, child health and FP efforts. Post pregnancy period represents a significant opportunity for reaching women with effective family planning. Service providers need to enhance PPFP counseling which is currently only 11%. Counseling about family planning newlyweds or couples who are about to get married can help in mitigating the challenge. A law has been passed on “Marital Counseling and Nikah Registration” and submitted to the Law Department for vetting by the Sindh government. It will make it mandatory for newlywed couples to seek counseling from trained providers for family planning.

Investing in FP is cost effective in preventing unwanted pregnancies, spacing children, reducing still births and making maternal and newborn care more effective.

Beyond the impacts of contraceptive use at the individual level, there are benefits also at the population level. From a macroeconomic perspective, reductions in fertility enhance economic growth as a result of reduced numbers of dependent children and youth.

*Dr.Arjumand Rabbani*



## 25th Anniversary

### A Silver Lining for NCMNH

In June 2019, the Committee completed 25 years of its efforts of averting maternal mortality in the country. We take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone who has been a part of its journey. It would not have been possible without the support of many including the government and our partners.

NCMNH will continue working with the government and engage with partner entities to contribute towards the implementation of Pakistan's 2030 commitment of reducing Maternal Mortality Ratio in the country.

### NCMNH Offers Assistance to the Government

#### Pakistan commits to 2030 Agenda for:

- Increasing Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) to 60%
- Reducing Fertility Rate of a woman to 2.2 birth per woman
- Lowering Average Population Growth Rate to 1.1%

Now is a critical time for the government to implement its ambitious agenda on reducing the Population Growth Rate. A letter was sent to the Federal Minister of Health- Dr. Zafar Mirza in this regard. We hope to have a meeting with him in the near future.



Our dedicated Karachi & Lahore teams

### Accreditation of NCMNH

NCMNH went through the [Equivalency Determination](#) (ED) process analysis and was certified as equivalent to a US public organization by the NGOsource.



### Ascertaining Causes of Maternal Health

During the year, the technical team at NCMNH led by Dr. Sadiqua Jafarey along with Dr. Azra Ahsan and 20 other experts including Obstetricians - Gynecologists and Physicians were engaged in reviewing verbal autopsy questionnaires for Pakistan Maternal Mortality Survey 2018-19.

A workshop was organized for training the reviewers on ICD- 10 Coding by NIPS (National Institute of Population Studies).



Reviewers attending ICD – 10 Coding workshop

## Recapitulation of Post Pregnancy Family Planning Intervention Activities - 2019

Since 2012, NCMNH Post Pregnancy Family Planning (PPFP) Intervention is working on increasing comprehensive family planning counseling and services in selected health facilities in Sindh and Punjab provinces. The objective is to enhance efforts for institutionalization of PPFP services based on lessons learned and progress made. Training and support has been provided to maternity service providers at different levels of health facilities.

### Orientation Meetings at Facilities

In current phase (2019- 2022) of the intervention, orientation meetings were held with the administrative staff, heads of departments and skilled birth attendants (SBAs) at all the 23 selected sites of Sindh & Punjab provinces.

A total of 88 Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs) were trained to provide PPFP counseling and services. For ensuring safe and quality services, Infection prevention sessions were held on site for 224 staff members of hospitals including SBAs and other support staff of labour rooms.

**394**

Awareness raising sessions with mothers & families visiting health facilities.

**191**

Meetings with Skilled Birth Attendants and Hospital Staff.

**90,973**

Deliveries conducted at intervention sites.  
35% of the delivered clients had 31,592 PPIUCD insertions (Jan to Dec 2019)

### Stakeholders Engaged at Dissemination Seminars



Chief guest at Karachi event



Certificate distribution at Lahore event

The PPFP intervention team organized two dissemination seminars in Karachi and Lahore respectively, to highlight NCMNH's efforts of making PPFP services available at selected public and private health facilities in three major cities of the country.

The encouraging results of this intervention, its challenges and the way forward were shared with the stakeholders present at these seminars. A total of 215 participants attended both these events. The Provincial Minister for Health & Population – Dr. Azra Pechuho was invited as the chief guest in Karachi, whereas, DGHS Punjab – Dr. Akhtar Rasheed spoke as the Chief Guest about the need for PPFP in Punjab.



## Skilled Birth Attendants Recognized

Improving knowledge and skills of SBAs who are in-service is an essential component of this intervention, as they are seldom evaluated for utilization of their skills and effectiveness of performance. The seminars gave an opportunity to recognize those SBAs who had contributed significantly towards achieving PPFP targets. A total of 20 SBAs and Heads of the Departments were acknowledged for their contribution in promoting PPIUCD services at their respective health facilities.



Minister giving Recognition Award

## Participation in Government and Partners Activities

- ◆ A successful meeting took place with Dr.Talib Lashari - Technical Advisor CIP– Focal Person FP2020 for institutionalization of PPFP in Sindh. He re-assured the government's support for the intervention.
- ◆ Dr.Azra Ahsan (Technical Consultant) represented NCMNH at the **Population Task Force** meeting under the headship of the Chief Minister to control Population growth.
- ◆ NCMNH is a member of the Sindh – FP2020 working group and actively participated in 2 meetings held in April and July 2019.
- ◆ NCMNH was one of the reviewers of the draft National Communications & Advocacy strategy on Family Planning. NCMNH was also given the task to review the FP policy document of Sindh.
- ◆ On the occasion of World Population Day -2019, NCMNH organized an Orientation session on PPFP for doctors, midwives and midwifery students at the Koochi Goth hospital—Karachi.
- ◆ NCMNH set a booth to answer queries of visitors at a Family Planning Gala organized by the Population Welfare Department. Information Education and Communications (IEC) material was disseminated to inform and educate the masses at the event.

## PPFP Services Come to Hyderabad

The Government of Sindh signed an MoU with NCMNH for making PPFP services available in Obs/ Gyne units of selected hospitals in Hyderabad.



Discussion with Dr.Lashari



Orientation session at Kohi Goth Hospital

## Training Midwives of the Future

Effective PPFP integration requires training and mentoring those service providers who assist women at the time of birth. 24 tutors from Midwifery schools of Karachi and Punjab were given refresher training in Family Planning (FP) including PPFP to update their knowledge and skills. A similar activity was conducted earlier for all midwifery tutors of Sindh to strengthen teaching of FP in Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health Schools, under the FP2020 Program.

## Activities of Naya Qadam Initiative in 2019

### Addition to our Resource : Development of Training Manuals

As a technical partner of Pathfinder International's consortium project - Naya Qadam, NCMNH is actively building the capacity of health care providers through training on PPFP in 3 districts of Sindh and 3 districts of Punjab.

2 Training Manuals on PPFP were developed for Skills Birth Attendants (SBAs) and Midwifery Tutors to support professional development. NCMNH contributed towards the technical section of these manuals - which are officially endorsed by the Population Welfare Department, the Government of Sindh, Integrated Reproductive, Maternal, New born & Child Health (IRMNCH) and the Nutrition Program of Government of Punjab.

### Training of Midwifery Tutors for Teaching Family Planning

3 Training of Trainers (ToT)s were conducted by NCMNH in March and April 2019, in Pakpattan, Okara, Jamkanda, Karachi, Larkana and Shaheed Benazirabad. The aim was to strengthen the capacity of midwifery tutors as trainers to design, facilitate and conduct trainings on PPFP and PAC (post abortion care).



Demonstration to participants

### Training of Skilled Birth Attendants at Civil Hospital

A 2 day training on PPFP was conducted in May 2019, for 21 Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs) working in three units of Ob/ Gyn department of Dr. K.M. Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital, at Dow University of Health Sciences - Karachi.

### Enabling Clinical Skills Supervision

NCMNH under Naya Qadam Initiative unveiled a Skills Lab in May 2019, at the Civil Hospital, Karachi. This facility will be used by the medical students to improve their clinical and counselling skills. Present at the inaugural ceremony were Secretary Population – Mr. Zahid Abbasi alongside the Technical Advisor CIP/ PWD – Dr. Talib Lashari, members of the Obs/Gyn Department, representatives of partner organizations and other stakeholders.



Ribbon cutting ceremony with the stakeholders



Counseling session with a couple

### 24x7 Post-Partum Family Planning Counsellors Deployed

To make counseling services more effective, 5 new counselors were trained and deputed in Civil hospital's Out Patient Department (OPD) for antenatal FP counseling and in the Labor room for counseling women in early labor. These counselors counsel clients about FP services and offer them a variety of contraceptive methods to enable them to choose a method of their choice.



## NCMNH participates in AAPNA Public Health Conference

NCMNH participated in the first Public Health Conference by AAPNA Institute of Public Health (AIPH), Jinnah Sindh Medical University (JSMU) in April, 2019. A stall was set by Pathfinder dedicated to Naya Qadam project Partners to showcase their work and materials. Models were displayed at the stall for demonstration of insertions of Post- Partum Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (PPIUCD, implant and female condom. Moreover, NCMNH's Technical Consultant, Dr. Azra Ahsan was among the panelists at a plenary session on Family Planning, Reproductive and Sexual Health.



Dr. Azra Ahsan talking at the plenary session

## Representation at the National Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting

Pathfinder under Naya Qadam Initiative provided support to the Department of Health for revision of Lady Health Visitors (LHV) curriculum. A Technical Working Group (TWG) at the National level was formed for this purpose. Project's Technical Consultant, Dr. Azra Ahsan attended two meetings organized by the group in September and October, 2019. She contributed towards the technical section of the revised curriculum draft.

## Partner's Commitment on Post Pregnancy Family Planning



Group Photo at Aspire Conference

### Position Paper on Post-Pregnancy Family Planning (PPFP) Partners' Commitment for Provision of Post-Pregnancy Family Planning Services

According to the recent Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-18, the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has dropped from 35 to 34 percent in past 5 years with only 25% couples using modern contraceptive methods. Improvements have however been documented in the percentage of deliveries at health facilities (from 48 to 64). This is an opportunity, not to be missed. Global evidence suggests that post-pregnancy family planning (post-partum and post-abortion family planning - PPFP and PAFP) is one of the most effective way of addressing family planning needs. Integrating family planning services into maternal and child health services is an effective strategy for taking advantage of women's increased contacts with the health care system in the time period around childbirth. More importantly, increasing the uptake of PPFP/PAFP has the potential to protect and empower women at a crucial time in their lives establish healthy birth spacing practices, and reduce maternal and child mortality and morbidity.

Pakistan committed at the 2012 London Summit on Family Planning to address barriers faced by women when trying to access family planning (FP). Under this FP2020 commitment Pakistan aims to increase its CPR to 50 percent by 2020. One of Pakistan's Strategies to achieve FP2020 commitments includes integration of FP in Health Services. Institutionalization of PPFP services at primary, secondary and tertiary care hospitals is much needed. Unfortunately, most doctors think provision of FP services is not their responsibility. They have personal beliefs/biases regarding FP methods that reflects in their professional services. These health care providers (HCPs) are influencing not only the future practices of their under graduate trainees but also the future of Pakistan and its people.

The partnering organizations affirm the following policy position on post-pregnancy family planning:

- Family Planning is a human right where couples have control over their reproductive lives and are able to significantly improve the health and economic welfare of their families
- Providing FP is a national responsibility and should be available for all women round the clock.
- HCPs should be motivated to understand that providing FP specifically PPFP is their responsibility.
- Counseling of family planning methods should be offered not only to women in antenatal/ postnatal and outpatient clinics but also at well women and baby clinics
- There should be a universal access to modern methods of contraception especially in labor room/ delivery areas.

A position paper developed by NCMNH on PPFP was endorsed by SoGP, Midwifery Association of Pakistan (MAP), College of Family Medicine (CFM), Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Association of Mothers and Newborns (AMAN) and Pathfinder International.

This position paper was launched and widely disseminated at the PPFP sessions hosted by NCMNH and Pathfinder under Naya Qadam and SoGP, during the 9th Annual Asia Pacific Initiative on Reproduction (ASPIRE) Medical Conference and at the Launch of Pak China Medcon in PMA Conference, held in Lahore. A large number of obstetricians/ gynecologists and general practitioners of Pakistan attended the conference.

## Pakistan's First Qualified Midwife Honoured

A large number of midwives, doctors and civil society members gathered at the Pakistan Medical Association House on August 3, 2019 to recognize Ms. Imtiaz Kamal 's contribution towards Midwifery in Pakistan. She is the first qualified midwife and the only living founding member of the Family Planning Association of Pakistan. She is also the Secretary General of the National Committee for Maternal and Neonatal Health (NCMNH).



## Midwives Making a Difference

The Regional Midwifery Summit was held in Karachi in October 2019. It was host to more than 700 midwives from across Pakistan. It was organized by the Midwifery Association of Pakistan (MAP) in collaboration with local and International partners. The theme of the conference was 'Midwives defenders of women's rights'.

The President of NCMNH - Prof Sadiqua Jafarey was happy to be a part of the event. Speaking as one of the panelists, she congratulated the organizers for holding the conference and encouraged the young midwives to educate themselves about issues related to maternal health. She also reminded the audience that MAP is a partner of NCMNH.



Dr. Sadiqua Jafarey speaking at the Midwifery Summit

## Snippets

### Learning Never Stops at NCMNH

An awareness session was held on the recent **"National Nutrition Survey - 2018"** for NCMNH staff members to better understand the current situation of nutrition in the country. Dr.Arjumand Rabbani and Ms.Maliha Noor shared the results of the survey through a colorful presentation.



A similar session was conducted by the IT department on data back up procedures for improving the IT skills of the staff. Mr. Mirza Umair and Mr.Umair Siddiqui conducted the session.

### Kashmir Hour at NCMNH

At the call of the Prime Minister Imran Khan, NCMNH team members came out on streets to observe the **"Kashmir Hour"**, in August 2019.



National Committee for Maternal & Neonatal Health  
36-C, Street 14, Off Khayaban-e-Shamsheer, D.H.A. Phase 5, Karachi-75500  
Tel: 92-21-35341597-8  
Email: [info@ncmnh.org.pk](mailto:info@ncmnh.org.pk)