

Maternal and Child Survival in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals - Unfinished Business

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Abstract

The optimal wellbeing and health of mother and child has been regarded as one of the global public health priorities owing to their vulnerable nature in the different settings. However, the ground reality is quite alarming with more than 5.2 million deaths being reported in under-five year age-group. Even on the maternal front, the existing trends of maternal mortality and the progress which we have made, it is quite obvious that we will miss the global target by more than 1 million lives. The need of the hour is to accelerate the progress and this can happen only if the individual nation sets their own targets and formulate tailor-made strategies which will be successful in their own settings to accomplish a reduction in maternal and child deaths. In conclusion, a lot needs to be done to improve the maternal and child survival estimates and it will essentially require a collaborative approach from the concerned stakeholders and sectors.

Keywords: Maternal health, Universal health coverage, World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

The optimal wellbeing and health of mother and child has been regarded as one of the global public health priorities owing to their vulnerable nature in the different settings.^[1] In fact, the maternal and child health issue has found a prominent place in both the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and also in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).^[2] With reference to the Goal 3 of SDGs, the target is to minimize the global maternal mortality ratio to <70/100,000 live births and to decrease newborn mortality to 12/1000 live births.^[2-4] Eventually, the global leaders are aiming to eliminate all the deaths of mother and child resulting because of the preventable causes.^[1-3]

Current situation

However, the ground reality is quite alarming, with more than 5.2 million deaths being reported in under 5 years' age group, of which in excess of 2.6 million deaths were reported within the 1st month of the lives of newborn.^[4] From the data available during the eras of both MDGs and SDGs, it was reported that major proportions of deaths were because of pneumonia, diarrhea, and birth complications.^[4] In fact, it has been

recommended that in excess of 50% of these deaths in under 5 years' age group could have easily been prevented or managed with the help of the application of simple and cost-effective interventions such as immunization, good nutrition, and quality-assured care by trained health professionals.^[1,4]

Even on the maternal front, based on the existing trends of maternal mortality and the progress which we have made, it is quite obvious that we will miss the global target by more than 1 million lives.^[2] Once again, the majority of the reported maternal deaths are resulting due to flaws in the delivery of the care during childbirth period and inability of the women to avail the services during their antenatal or postnatal period.^[1,2,5] Women and their families have found it extremely difficult to access the healthcare facilities, and absence of trained

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health personnel or logistics or equipment in the rural and remote settings of low and middle income nations has further complicated the problem.^[2,5]

Required actions

The need of the hour is to accelerate the progress, and this can happen only if the individual nation sets their own targets and formulate tailor-made strategies which will be successful in their own settings to accomplish a reduction in maternal and child deaths.^[2,3] One of the crucial aspects is to aim for universal health coverage, which will enable and empower all women and children to access essential health service without suffering from the financial consequences.^[1,3] Moreover, there is a big time need for multisectoral involvement and the adoption of a multifaceted comprehensive approach.^[4]

Other areas requiring attention

In addition, there is an immense need to strengthen the surveillance system pertaining to the deaths of both mother and child.^[2,4] This can be accomplished by the strengthening of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in the developing nations, and all efforts should be taken for meeting the same.^[2,4] Further, we should always be on the lookout for the adoption of innovative strategies which can play a vital role in enhancing the access, coverage, and the quality of services such as adoption of mobile apps by the team of healthcare personnel.^[1,2,4]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a lot needs to be done to improve the maternal and child survival estimates, and it will essentially require a collaborative approach from the concerned stakeholders and sectors.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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