

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



***Developing Global Strategies to Reduce
Maternal Mortality and ensure the perinatal
Well-being of Mothers and Children in
Developing Countries***

-Committee Guide-

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CONTENTS

- I. Introduction
 - a. Introduction to the committee
 - b. Introduction to the topic
- II. Facts and current situation
 - a. Facts
 - b. Current situation
- III. Most affected regions
- IV. Definitions of key terms
- V. Useful links and resolutions
- VI. Bibliography (useful links)

I. INTRODUCTION

a) INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency within the United Nations that focuses on global health. It was founded in 1948 and is based in Geneva, Switzerland. The WHO has 194 Member States and works in over 150 countries, working to improve healthcare and ensure that people everywhere have access to basic health services.

One of the WHO's main goals is to help people live healthier lives, no matter where they are from. It deals with a wide range of issues, such as preventing the spread of viruses, improving healthcare facilities and making sure medicines are available for everybody. The WHO also helps during global health emergencies, such as pandemics or natural disasters. They provide guidelines for healthcare systems and supports affected regions with resources and expertise. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO provided daily updates, recommended safety measures and helped deliver vaccines to countries with limited access. Besides helping in emergencies, the WHO sets international health standards and collects information to track how people's health is changing. It publishes reports on topics like life expectancy, child mortality or vaccination

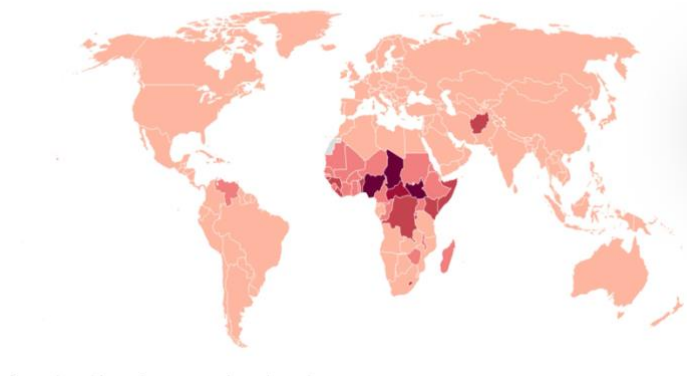
rates, which then help governments and organizations make informed decisions. Education and awareness are also important parts of the WHO's mission. It organizes campaigns to inform people about health and hygiene issues like mental health and access to clean water. By working with governments, scientists and local communities, the WHO wants to build stronger healthcare systems to help people live healthier lives around the world.

b) INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC.

Maternal mortality is still a significant issue in many developing countries, with 800 women die every day due to complications related to pregnancy or childbirth-related causes, many of which could have been prevented. Newborn babies face significant health risks during the perinatal period, caused by poverty, poor nutrition, lack of medical care and limited knowledge about health.

The number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020.

■ ≤ 245 ■ 246 - 490 ■ 491 - 734 ■ 735 - 979 ■ ≥ 980



To deal with these challenges, it is important to develop effective global strategies to improve the health of mothers and their babies. This means strengthening healthcare services, providing access to emergency care and giving families better health information.

It is essential to collaborate with aid groups, the WHO and to be supported by governments. Working together is crucial to ensure that mothers and children worldwide can live safe and healthy lives.

II. FACTS AND CURRENT SITUATION

a) FACTS

❖ Daily Maternal Deaths

Worldwide, about 800 women die every day due to complications during pregnancy or childbirth. These numbers show how important maternal health

care is. Many of these deaths could have been prevented if timely medical assistance and better access to qualified care had been provided.

❖ **Majority in Developing Countries**

95% of maternal deaths take place in developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. “These regions face serious challenges, including poor health infrastructure, a shortage of trained staff and limited access to emergency care, which contribute to a high number of deaths. **Main Causes are Preventable**

The most common causes of maternal mortality are severe bleeding, infections, high blood pressure during pregnancy or unsafe abortion. Many of these deaths could have been prevented if women had access to trained health workers and proper medical centers. **Vulnerable Groups**

Certain groups of women have a higher risk of dying during or after pregnancy. Especially women under 18 are particularly at risk, as are women who live in rural areas or those who do not have access to midwives. Targeted measures are necessary to support these groups.

❖ **UN Global Goal**

To solve this problem, the United Nations has set a global goal. The maternal mortality rate is to be reduced to fewer than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030. Coordinated international efforts, improved health services and increased awareness are needed to achieve this goal.

b) CURRENT SITUATION

The health situation for mothers and newborns remains very critical in many developing countries. Every day, countless women die from preventable complications during pregnancy or childbirth, mainly caused by poor access to health care, lack of medical personnel and poor infrastructure. The maternal mortality rate in sub-Saharan Africa is over 500 deaths per 100,000 live births. Most women have to give birth to their children without any help from doctors or midwives.

Unsafe abortions or early pregnancies by teenagers also strongly contribute to the high mortality rate. In some countries, 20 to 30% of all births occur to girls under the age of 18. Newborns also have a high risk of death due to infections,

complications during childbirth or due to lack of proper care in the first days of life.

Poor women living in rural regions or crisis areas also face many difficulties. Medical help is usually not accessible, or they have to travel long distances to the nearest healthcare facility. However, there are also positive developments; countries such as Rwanda, Nepal or Bangladesh have invested in healthcare for mothers and children and thus shown that this can save lives. In some regions, however, progress has been slow and international support and targeted measures are needed to achieve sustainable change.

III. MOST AFFECTED REGIONS

Maternal mortality continues to be a significant problem occurring more frequently in some parts of the world than others. According to data from the WHO and the United Nations), about 95% of maternal deaths occur in low or lower middle-income countries.

Sierra Leone, Somalia, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are all countries with very high mortality rates. In Sierra Leone, the maternal mortality rate in 2023 was over 1100 per 100,000 births. Women die every day from causes that can be avoided in other countries, such as heavy bleeding, infections or complications during childbirth. Not having enough hospitals, poverty, political instability or armed conflicts are the most common causes of women's deaths.

In countries such as Pakistan, India, Iran, Palestine, South Africa and Mexico, the situation is less dramatic but still critical. While significant progress has been made in recent years, women living poor regions still do not have access to safe childbirth services or emergency care.

In industrialized countries such as Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia or France, maternal mortality is very low. These countries have care programs during pregnancy, trained medical personnel and modern healthcare facilities. Births take place in the presence of midwives or doctors.

The USA is a special case: Although it is a highly developed country, its maternal mortality rate is much higher than in most European countries,

disproportionately affecting Black women and those from low-income backgrounds

Countries like Brazil, China, and Russia are in the middle range. There are many quality medical facilities in cities, but there is a very big gap in access between rural and urban areas, as well as between population groups.

Indigenous communities in particular often have a lower chance of receiving proper care.

These differences highlight the critical importance of ensuring access to high-quality healthcare in order to save lives. In order to reduce maternal mortality worldwide, it is necessary to invest in the training of midwives, the expansion of maternal care and nationwide health education, especially in the countries that are most affected.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Understanding these terms is essential and leads to an overall understanding of the discussed topic.

- ❖ **Maternal Mortality:** Death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth, or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, due to complications related to pregnancy or its management
- ❖ **Maternal Mortality Ratio:** The number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.
- ❖ **Antenatal Care:** Routine medical care given to pregnant women to ensure the health of both mother and fetus. WHO recommends at least four ANC visits per pregnancy.
- ❖ **Postnatal Care:** Care provided to the mother and newborn immediately after birth, a critical period for preventing complications.
- ❖ **Developing countries:** Nations with lower income levels, limited industrialization and weaker healthcare systems. They often face higher maternal and infant mortality rates due to poor medical access, infrastructure and lacking resources.
- ❖ **Health System Strengthening:** Long-term investments in improving health infrastructure, workforce, equipment, logistics, financing and government reforms

V. Possible Solutions

Reducing maternal mortality and ensuring perinatal well-being in developing countries requires many different, culturally sensitive, and proven approaches.

- The first point is improving access to skilled care. This can be achieved by deploying more midwives, nurses and skilled birth attendants, especially in rural areas. It can further be supported by establishing community-based health centers and mobile clinics to reach remote populations. It is also crucial to strengthen referral systems for obstetric emergencies and ensure transportation is readily available.
- Secondly, it is essential to strengthen health systems. This can be accomplished by increasing public investment in maternal and newborn health services, including prenatal and postnatal care. It also involves integrating maternal health into national health plans to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Thirdly there is an urgent need to promote education and awareness about sexual and reproductive health in schools and communities. Women should be empowered through literacy programs and gender equality programs. To achieve these goals, it is essential to involve men and community leaders in challenging harmful cultural norms and support maternal health.
- The last and probably most crucial point, is to foster global partnership and secure funding, in order to reach these goals . This means encouraging collaboration with UN-agencies, NGOs and donor governments to finance maternal health programs. It also includes creating or expanding public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure, training and service delivery.

By incorporating these areas, realistic and impactful strategies, that align with WHO goals, can be built.

VI. Bibliography (useful links)

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