Every Newborn Action: Regional and country responses to the COVID pandemic

#EveryNewborn   #LivesInTheBalance
High-quality maternal and newborn health care are essential health services which must be sustained to protect the lives and health of women and children.

These essential services must be further strengthened to withstand shocks, such as COVID 19, and make the progress agreed to in global goals for women and children’s health.
Progress toward decreasing maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths is threatened

• Pregnant women are at increased risk of mortality and negative outcomes because of reduced access to facility births / births with skilled health professionals due to deployment of staff to care for COVID patients and reduced care-seeking at health facilities due to fears about COVID-19 exposure and restrictions.

• Although newborns are less likely to die from COVID they are at increased risk for mortality from other preventable and treatable conditions as access and availability to health services are disrupted due to the COVID pandemic.

Overall Guidance on Maintaining Services

• Community-based health care, including outreach and campaigns, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

• Maintaining essential services: operational guidance for the COVID-19 context – Chapter 2 on life course and disease considerations

• Clinical management of COVID-19 disease, chapter on management of pregnant or lactating women or newborns with suspected or confirmed COVID 19

• https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

• https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/links/covid19-resources-and-support-for-mncah-and-ageing/en/
ENAP progress, but progress is threatened, therefore it is critical to protect, maintain and expand MNH services to reach SDG goals by 2030
How has the pandemic affected maternal and newborn health services in the Africa region including the infodemic, and what has been the response?

Assumpta Muriithi
WHO Regional Office for Africa

Fatima Gohar
UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region
Background and Challenges

ANC & Family planning 2019/2020, in country X, May 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators (Jan-April)</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>Reduction</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 ANC Visits plus</td>
<td>42108</td>
<td>20874</td>
<td>2134</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live births at health facility</td>
<td>32388</td>
<td>25448</td>
<td>6940</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caesarean sections done</td>
<td>2894</td>
<td>1670</td>
<td>1224</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Oral Pills - New Clients</td>
<td>31619</td>
<td>2974</td>
<td>28645</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injectables - New Clients</td>
<td>34565</td>
<td>24517</td>
<td>10048</td>
<td>29</td>
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</table>

Challenges

- Many health facilities and health workers repurposed to COVID-19 response
- Reduced access to services mainly due:
  - Fear
  - Lack of /Inadequate information
  - Lockdown/curfew
  - Inadequate IPC
  - Shortage and stockouts due to disruption of the supply chain.
- Low prioritization of essential services for asymptomatic women
- Increased GBV – with lack of copying mechanism (no school, no going to work/business etc.)
- Stigma and conflicting inaccurate messages resulting in poor care practices (e.g. low breastfeeding).
- Insufficient implementation of innovative strategies for maintaining the essential services, including the self-care interventions, the digital health, the task sharing.
Interagency regional and inter sectoral working groups for coordinated action & joint advocacy (WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF)

Regional joint interim guiding documents, dissemination and support with implementation

Joint RMNCAH Monitoring and advocacy

Risk communication & community engagement

**KEY ACTIONS**

• Developed joint regional documents including joint reference document on the continuity of MNH services;

• Bi-weekly MNH webinars and country specific joint follow up with countries;

• Coordinated efforts for regional eLearning platform and organized first virtual training for the MNH and QI focal persons;

• Engage of policy and stakeholder address barriers to access and quality of care;

• Engage stakeholders & communities in designing RCCE strategies, communication plans & materials;
How have the Partners come together to support countries in the region to continue essential services for MNH during the pandemic?

Dr Rajesh Mehta
WHO Regional Office for South East Asia

Dr Atnafu Getachew Asfaw
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
South-East Asia
MNH during the Pandemic

• **Disruption in services:** 41% drop in ANC and 31% drop in institutional delivery in Apr-May 2020 (Bangladesh DHIS2)

• **Partnership:**
  • Advocacy and guidance: Joint Country support
  • Documentation and sharing best practices
  • Research and knowledge management

• **Regional Guidance:**
  • Principles and strategic guidance
  • Operational: Practical considerations

• **COVID-19 positive cases**
  • Registry of positive pregnant women, newborns and children: Clinical profile and outcomes
  • Standard management protocols
## South-East Asia MNH during the Pandemic

### Mapping the SRMNCAH services

#### Disruption, HS Factors, Plans

Mapping of delivery of SRMNCAH services during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Assessment Tool – Baseline May 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Bhutan</th>
<th>DPR Korea</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Maldives</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
<th>Timor-Leste</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disruption of SRMNCAH services: Mar-Apr 2020</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>NOT</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduction in ANC in health facilities</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>- Stillbirths</td>
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<td>NOT</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Neonatal deaths</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Child deaths</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Monitoring SRMNCAH services

Country dashboard

[Graph showing trend of antenatal care services and vaccination rates]
Modelling of direct and indirect effects of the pandemic and national response

- Projection of epidemic
- Potential health impact on women, newborns and children
  - Additional mortality
  - Low birth weight, childhood under-nutrition
  - Birth rate
- Social and economic impact of the pandemic and lockdowns
How does COVID-19 impact on newborn health differ in emergency-affected countries? And what are the key challenges you are facing in those countries in your Region?

Khalid Siddeeg
WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
Graded emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly signals and events</th>
<th>Total number of graded emergencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68 Signals detected</td>
<td>3 Grade 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Signal followed-up</td>
<td>8 Grade 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 New event</td>
<td>2 Grade 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Ongoing events</td>
<td>14 Protracted 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Events
  - Signals: 1, 2, 3-4, 5-7, 8-14
  - Non-Euro countries
    - Grade 1
    - Grade 2
    - Grade 3
    - Protracted 1
    - Protracted 2
    - Protracted 3

Map showing Yemen, Iraq, and Syria.
Iraq

ANC Beneficiaries (PHC)

Number of pregnant women and adolescent girls who attended 1st ANC

Number of pregnant women and adolescent girls who attended ANC and completed 4 ANC

Number of total deliveries, live births, and cesarean section (health facilities)

Number of total deliveries
Number of live births
Number of delivery with cesarean section
Harmonizing efforts to respond to maternal and newborn health needs during Covid-19 pandemic in humanitarian settings is a great challenge, given the competing priorities in such situations – what are examples of joint response and partnership activities going in the country level?

Tomomi Kitamura
UNICEF Middle East & North Africa Region
Every Newborn Coverage Targets to 2025

Launch in August/September 2020

Get involved!
bit.ly/EveryNewbornAction

www.unicef.org
www.who.int
www.healthynewbornnetwork.org

WHO-SEARO Regional guidelines are available at:
https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/331816

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