

Risk of death on the day of birth: receiving widespread media attention through partnership with Save the Children



Shefali Oza, Simon Cousens, and Joy E Lawn

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London
MARCH: Centre for Maternal, Adolescent, Reproductive, and Child Health



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Introduction

- Risk of death is highest during and immediately after birth.
- Assessing this risk, especially on the day of birth (day 0), is needed to prioritize timely, targeted interventions.
- Data challenges include underreporting, misclassification of live births and stillbirths, as well as between days (especially day 0 and day 1).
- There are no systematic nationally-comparable estimates for risk by day during the first month (neonatal period).

Research aim: To estimate the daily neonatal risk, focusing on the first day and week after birth, for 186 countries for 2012.

Save the Children (SC) partnership

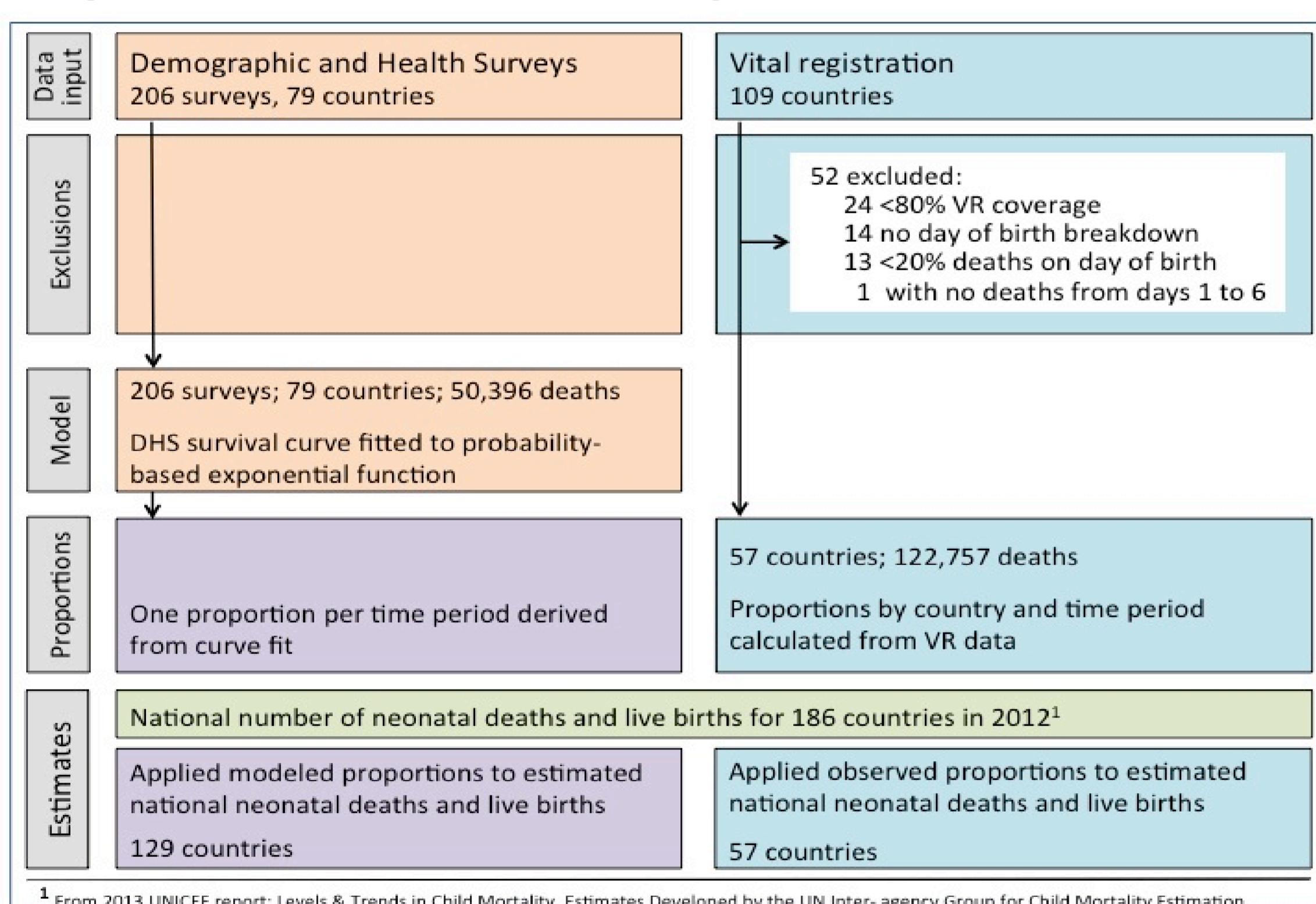
- SC produces an annual State of the World's Mothers (SOWM) report launched on US Mother's Day each year, with media outreach, but only 1 of 9 previous reports had covered newborn survival.
- We partnered with SC to develop and publish these risk estimates as original research in their 2013 SOWM report.

Partnership aim: To increase research impact and reach by placing results in State of the World's Mothers report.

Methods

- We used vital registration (VR) and Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data to produce estimates of risk and number of deaths by neonatal time period (figure 1).

Figure 1 – Analysis strategy



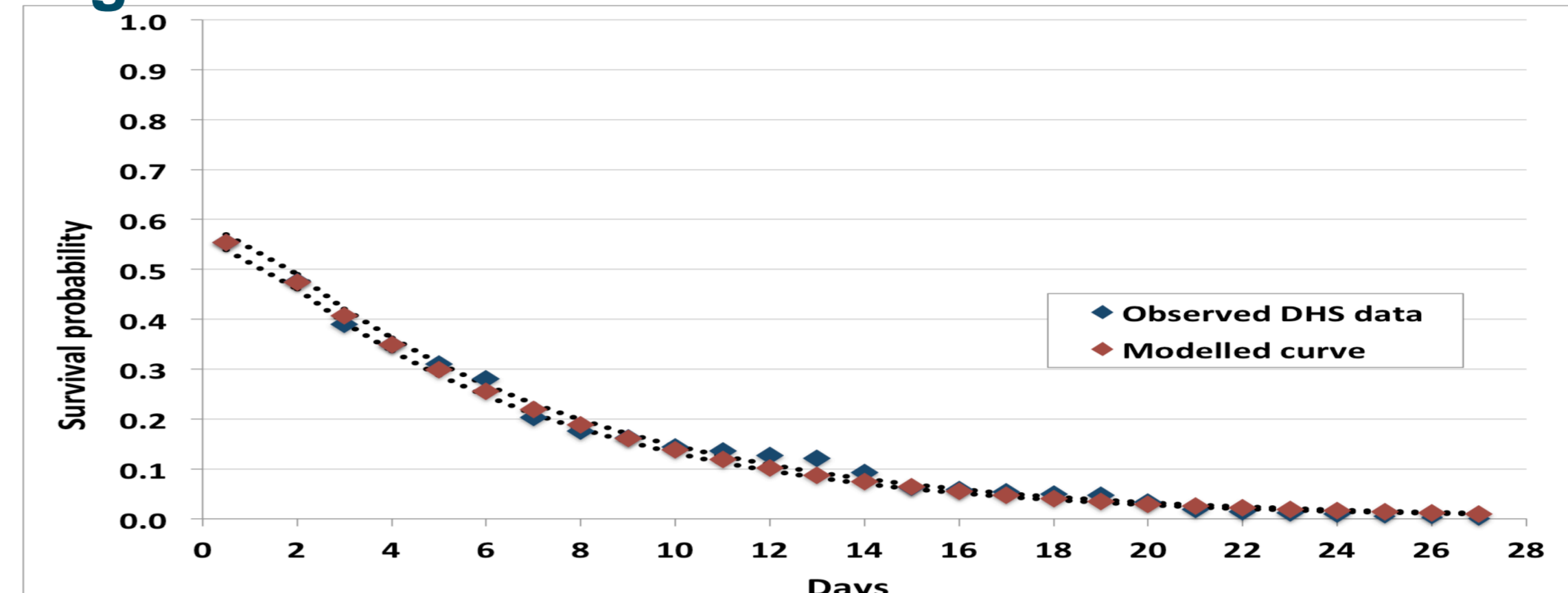
Save the Children (SC) partnership

- We worked closely with the SC research and media teams to:
 - Describe the methodology for a non-specialist audience
 - Identify how best to present the results in the SOWM report and which additional analyses may increase media attention. We particularly focused on US and Canadian national and sub-national estimates due to the potential for local media coverage
 - Address journalists to increase correct interpretation of the results
- Launch events were held worldwide, including at the UN, World Health Assembly, LSHTM, and in >70 countries, but SC began working with TV, radio, newspaper, and other media weeks before the launch.
- SC produced a short film titled "First moments" with Jennifer Garner, Alyson Hannigan, and others, as well as films from Africa and Asia of new mothers and babies, experiences and feelings.
- SC utilized multimedia, including a user-friendly webpage with a digital version of the report, links to political action, social media participation, interactive maps, and more. An intentional Social media push was developed including blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr etc.

Results

- Our model fitted the data well (figure 2).

Figure 2 – Observed versus modelled survival curve

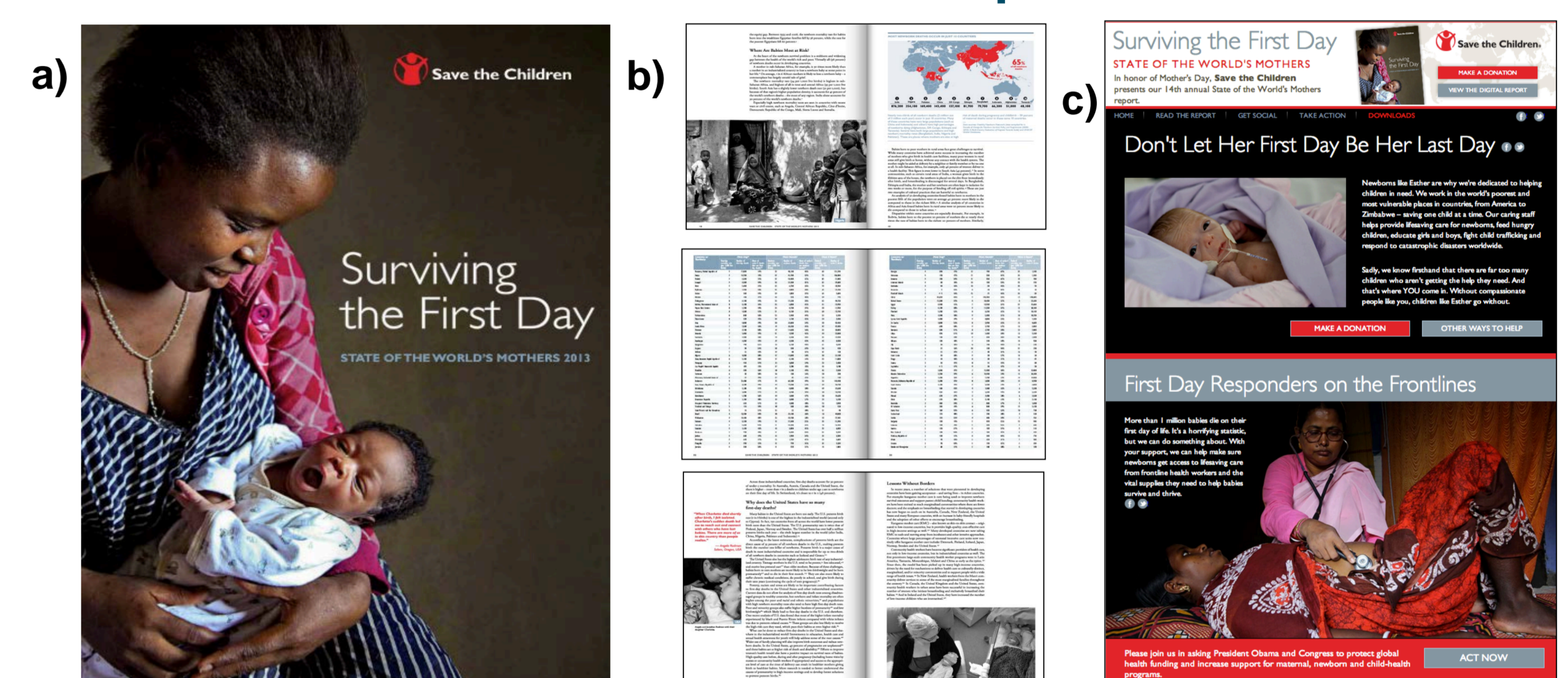


- Of 2.85 million neonatal deaths, there were an estimated 1.02 million (35.6%) day 0 and 2.12 million (74.4%) week 1 deaths.
- Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest day 0 and week 1 risk, and South Asia had the largest number of deaths.

Save the Children partnership

- Our work was featured on the cover of (figure 3a), within (figure 3b), and on the webpage (figure 3c) for the 2013 SOWM report.

Figure 3 – Research featured throughout Save the Children's 2013 State of the World's Mothers report and website



- The report was gained widespread attention, considerably higher than any previous SOWM report
 - Within 1 month of publication, the report had 3,100+ media placements in over 100 countries, including in local, national, and international media (e.g. BBC, NY Times, Associated Press).
 - There was significant coverage in several high-burden countries, notably India, which has the highest number of day 0 deaths.
 - With conventional and social media, SC estimated a total of 2.1+ billion media impressions, including 1.6+ billion in the US.

Conclusions

- The risk of death is very high in the first few days after, birth and the pattern is remarkably consistent across countries. Many of these deaths are preventable yet policy attention and programmatic investments has been limited

Save the Children (SC) partnership

- Possible reasons for such extensive coverage include:
 - First day deaths are a problem in rich countries as well as poor and the report had original research, new data and rankings for first day deaths
 - Countries with strong media presence, like the US, UK, and Canada, ranked especially high for proportion of first day deaths
 - Birth and newborns are topics to which people can relate to with emotion as this is a universal experience
 - Including newborn risk rankings in a report that publishes annual maternal health rankings helps to further link these closely related topics
 - Quantitative results were linked with intervention/policy discussions
 - A synergistic partnership between academics, advocates, and parents
 - Comprehensive use of a wide range of publicity options, including conventional media, social media, and multimedia.