



MATERNAL, NEONATAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Obstetric complications are the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age in developing countries, where 53% of births take place without the help of a skilled birth attendant. A woman living in sub-Saharan Africa has a 1 in 16 chance of dying during pregnancy. This is twice as high as in South Asia, four times as high as in Latin America, and 50 times higher than in most industrial countries.

IntraHealth is a leader in developing and implementing innovative, effective strategies to save women's and children's lives. We currently have projects working to improve maternal, neonatal and child health in Armenia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal and Southern Sudan. Our key approaches include:

Preventing Postpartum Hemorrhage

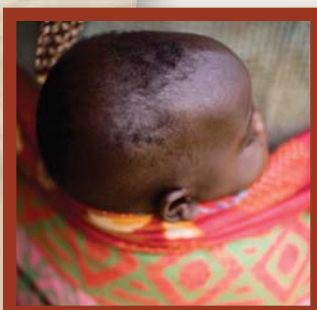
Almost a quarter of maternal deaths worldwide are caused by postpartum hemorrhage (PPH)—excessive and rapid blood loss that can cause a severe drop in the mother's blood pressure and can lead to shock and death. In general, women who die from PPH die within two hours of giving birth. Having a birth attendant at delivery who is skilled in preventing and treating PPH may be a woman's only hope of beginning her life as a new mother. Through a USAID-funded regional initiative in Benin, Mali and Ethiopia, IntraHealth demonstrated that active

management of the third stage of labor (AMTSL)—an evidence-based step in decreasing the incidence of PPH—could be successfully introduced in public health facilities. AMTSL has since been added to national protocols in Benin and Mali, and IntraHealth is involved in developing protocols and training curricula geared toward global expansion of this life-saving practice.

Helping Communities Support Women through Healthy Pregnancies, Safe Births and Postpartum Periods

IntraHealth carries out community-based programs that mobilize pregnant women, their family caregivers and community members to recognize, plan for and respond to problems during pregnancy and childbirth. We have tailored approaches to the local context and needs in El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Nicaragua and West Bank and Gaza. In Nicaragua, in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, IntraHealth trained traditional birth attendants and other primary providers in life-saving and basic emergency skills. The approach included establishing emergency obstetric and neonatal care committees in the community, pooling emergency funds, and establishing community transportation plans to ensure women and newborns reach referral facilities quickly.

In West Bank and Gaza, IntraHealth addressed extreme health care needs caused by armed conflict, including improving access to emergency obstetric care to prevent the deaths of laboring women in transit to hospitals. We focused on interventions to provide emergency obstetric care; emergency medical equipment and aid for civilians; and distance learning programs to



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The people and government of the United States have supported this health-promoting work via the funding and technical partnership of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

IntraHealth International mobilizes local talent to create sustainable and accessible health care in developing countries. A not-for-profit organization, IntraHealth has worked in more than 50 countries over the last three decades.

provide rapid technical support to frontline care providers.

Strengthening Health Care Providers in Labor and Delivery

IntraHealth has a long history of improving the performance of health care providers in labor and delivery through innovative training and learning approaches. In Senegal—a country with few physicians—we designed an intervention that greatly enhanced the Ministry of Health’s capacity to train providers in emergency obstetrics, thus giving nurses, midwives and community health workers an expanded role in the effort to reduce maternal mortality. We strengthened and upgraded the clinical skills of health care providers through on-the-job training in Bangladesh, where 90% of births take place in the home. In an effort to increase the use of skilled attendants at home births, we trained paramedics attending home births to make referrals for complications and provide AMTSL to prevent postpartum hemorrhage.

Preventing and Repairing Obstetric Fistula

In Ethiopia, IntraHealth launched a comprehensive obstetric fistula care project, which increased community awareness of the need

to prevent prolonged or obstructed labor and seek emergency obstetric care early. The program collaborated with Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital to reintegrate women who received fistula repairs into the community and strengthened communication and referrals between the communities and health care delivery networks. The one-year pilot program cured 172 women with obstetric fistula and educated more than 150,000 community members on obstetric fistula causes, treatment, care and prevention.

Taking Knowledge to Practice

There are many evidence-based approaches to improving the health of pregnant women, newborns and young children; however, this knowledge is not often put into practice at scale. In the northern Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, IntraHealth is assisting governments in identifying strategies and approaches known to improve health among women and children with the fewest resources and least access to health care. These states are home to approximately ten million pregnant women and 14 million children under the age of five. Areas of focus include preventing and treating anemia, growth promotion and complementary feeding, the delay of marriage and first birth and newborn care.

(Sources for health statistics: WHO, UNFPA, United Nations Millennium Project)

Photos: Christopher Wilson Creative | Photos should not be construed as indicating the health status of persons depicted.