Maternal health at the cusp of the MDGs: how can academic centers contribute?

Consortium of Universities for Global Health: Mobilizing Research for Global Health

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Maternal Mortality: Critical Facts

• Close to 300,000 maternal deaths/year
• 99% in developing countries
• Lifetime maternal mortality risk (2012):
  – Chad: 1 in 15
  – United States: 1 in 2,400
  – Greece: 1 in 25,500
• More than 85% of deaths could be prevented if women had timely access to quality care

Source: IHME, 2011; The World Bank 2012
Impact of mother’s deaths on children’s survival

– Bangladesh: Cumulative probability of survival to age 10 when the mother dies vs when mother is alive: 24% vs 89%
– Ethiopia: 81% of index children die by the age of 6 months
– Tanzania, less than 50% of index children survive to the age of 5, compared to over 90% of children whose mothers survive.
– South Africa, children under 10 years whose mother died are at 15 times the risk of dying as children whose mothers were alive.

Sources: Ronsmans C 2010; Yamin, 2013; Yamin, 2015
Millennium Development Goal Number 5: Improve Maternal Health

— Target a: Reduce by three quarters maternal mortality ratio by 2015, from 1990 levels
— Target b: Achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015 (2005)
Global progress 1990-2013

• 45% reduction in global average MMR (from 380/100,000 to 210/100,000)
• 19 countries have already achieved MDG5a as of 2013
• 63 countries on track to achieve it by 2015
• 114 countries achieved > 40% total reduction in MMR from 1990-2103, but not MDG5

Global maternal mortality trends

Global Number of Maternal Deaths, 1980-2013

Progress towards MDG 5, but many countries are lagging

**FIGURE 4**

Progress towards Millennium Development Goal 5 in *Countdown* countries

- **Number of Countdown countries**
  - 40
  - 30
  - 20
  - 10
  - 0

- **On track**
- **Making progress**
- **Insufficient progress**
- **No progress**

Overall progress as of 2010

Inequalities in coverage of key interventions: Skilled birth attendance by region, 1990-2010

Figure 1. The percentage of women who had a skilled attendant (doctor, nurse or mid-wife) at birth increased approximately 15% globally from 1990 to 2010, but with notable distinctions in progress between regions. Source: DHS and MICS data, as reported in UN-ECOSOC (2014b).
Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”

- A general health goal with targets and outcome indicators for specific conditions or areas of health

169 targets under consideration
Global Alliance of Maternal Health Academic Centers (GAMHAC)

Overall objective: Strengthen the global maternal health community through:

1. Creating opportunities for scientific debate and consensus building
2. Expanding access to critical knowledge, evidence and information
3. Strengthening capacity of young professionals for work in maternal health
4. Filling knowledge gaps through implementation research
5. Providing evidence to support continued focus on maternal health in the post-2015 development agenda
Maternal Health Task Force

• 2011-2018

• Funded by the Gates Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Hansen Foundation, and individuals

• Mandate: Improve maternal health by strengthening the global and national maternal health communities
Objective 1: Create opportunities for scientific debate and consensus building.
Objective 2: Expand access to critical evidence and information

The Maternal Health Task Force believes that a strong, well-informed and integrated community with equitable access to high-quality technical evidence is critical to our goal of eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity worldwide.

Featured

New white paper

What has worked and what more is needed to prevent maternal mortality and ensure high-quality care? This new white paper summarizes priorities for maternal health research based on gaps in current knowledge in low- and middle-income countries. Download the paper >>
Objective 3: Strengthen Capacity Of Young Professionals For Work In Maternal Health
Objective 4: Implementation Research

• Identify knowledge gaps and research priorities
• Generate and share information on funding opportunities
• Facilitate collaboration among academic groups at all stages of research
• Ensure that policies and practices in maternal health are evidence-driven
• Provide a vehicle through which academic centres of global maternal health can strategically link together to work with key policy makers
Objective 4: Implementation Research

- Consultation of 26 global maternal health researchers to identify persistent and critical knowledge gaps to be filled to reduce MMM and improve maternal health:
- Health systems research to identify models that can deliver what is known to be effective at scale
- Development and testing of tools to measure quality of care and promote ongoing quality improvement at the facility, district, and national level

Source: Kendall T. MHTF, 2015
Objective 4: Implementation Research

- Distribution and retention of healthcare workers, task shifting, innovative training models to improve practice and managerial capacity
- Attitudes, behavior, and power relationships between health professionals and within institutions
- Increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, urbanization, and the persistence of social and economic inequality
- Evaluation of effectiveness, feasibility, and equity impacts of health system interventions
- Evidence for policy advocacy, and interdisciplinary collaboration

Source: Kendall T. MHTF, 2015
Objective 5: Evidence for policy

- Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality: Engage academic centers in this critical effort
- Maternal Health Indicators
- Consultation and consensus building
- Technical cooperation for implementation
Next steps

• Establish GAMHAC (MHTF: Secretariat for first phase)
• Invite academic centers from around the world to join this effort
• Develop and launch dedicated knowledge management and information platform
• Coordinate closely with Coalition of Centres in Global Child Health
• Fundraise and explore opportunities to launch GAMHAC and ensure its sustainability
Thank you!
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