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ECOSOC 3: Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Research Report

Topic 2: Creating a framework to reduce maternal mortality rates in developing countries.



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Introduction

Annually, 529 000 women die from pregnancy-related cause. 95 % of these maternal deaths occurred in developing countries, lacking adequate health care, contraception and safe access to abortion services.

Basic emergency obstetric and health interventions need to be provided in low-income countries to reduce this unacceptable maternal mortality rate.

Definition of Key Terms

Maternal mortality refers to the death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth, or within 42 days of the termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management.

A **developing country**, often referred to as a less developed country or a low-income country, is characterized by lower industrialization, lower Human Development Index (HDI), and lower standards of living compared to more economically advanced nations.

Background Information

Maternal mortality is an issue on the global scale. Nations and communities all around the globe are affected by this drastic fact. Low-income countries present a higher mortality rate among women and particularly teenage girls.

A major issue on maternal mortality is adolescent pregnancy. In 2019, 55% of unintended pregnancies among girls aged 15-19 years ended in abortions, which are often unsafe.

Teenagers are more likely to experience pregnancy complications or maternal death than women aged 20 or older. Contraceptives, health care or knowledge on the subject of pregnancy are not easily accessible to adolescents in many places and even more in developing countries. Moreover, teenage mothers face higher risks of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis and systemic infections. All these factors can lead to a premature death of the adolescent during her pregnancy.

The mortality rate grows even higher among girls aged under 15 as they are less likely to be physically developed to sustain a healthy pregnancy and to give birth. It is of the utmost importance to provide solutions and create a concrete framework to decrease maternal mortality.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

UNICEF

UNICEF focuses on maternal and child health, providing assistance to countries in areas such as nutrition, antenatal care, and immunization, contributing to the overall reduction of maternal mortality.

Sub-Saharan African Nations:

Countries in this region, such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone, are experiencing one of the highest mortality rates in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for around 70% of maternal deaths in 2020.

South Asian Nations:

Countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan also experience high maternal mortality rates. In 2020, Southern Asia accounted for around 16% maternal deaths.

The World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. It works to coordinate and promote global health efforts, address health emergencies, and provide guidance on health policies and strategies.¹

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF is a department of the United Nations whose aim is improving children's health and education, especially in poor countries.²

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA formerly the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, is a UN agency aimed at improving reproductive and maternal health worldwide.³

¹ WHO <https://www.who.int>

² UNICEF <https://www.unicef.org>

³ UNFPA <https://www.unfpa.org>

Relevant UN Resolutions

[A/HRC/47/L.23/Rev.1](#)

Resolution on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights, the Council urges all States to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and to respect, protect and fulfil sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.⁴

[SDG 3: Target 3.1](#)

A resolution to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages and aims at that by 2030, the global maternal mortality ratio will be reduced to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.⁵

[Resolution 2010/1](#)

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Creating a framework to reduce maternal mortality rates in developing countries is crucial since maternal health is a fundamental human right. High maternal mortality rates reflect disparities in access to healthcare and underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to ensure safe pregnancies and childbirth, contributing to overall community well-being. Notable breakthroughs include increased awareness of maternal health issues, advancements in medical technology, and collaborative efforts between governments, NGOs, and international organizations. Innovations in healthcare delivery, such as mobile clinics and telemedicine, have also played a role in addressing maternal mortality in resource-limited settings. Progress has been made through targeted interventions, improved healthcare infrastructure, and the implementation of evidence-based policies. Initiatives focusing on prenatal care, skilled birth attendance, and education for women have contributed to a decline in maternal mortality rates in some regions. Global initiatives have been taken such as the EPMM program to prevent the dangers linked to pregnancy.

Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM)

EPMM is a global initiative with the ultimate goal of ending preventable maternal mortality to support achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets to attain an average global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.⁶

⁴ A/HRC <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/L.23/Rev.1>

⁵SDG,target3.1 <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-3-1-maternal-mortality#:~:text=SDG%20Target%203.1%20%7C%20Maternal%20mortality,per%20100%20000%20live%20births>

⁶ EPMM <https://www.who.int/initiatives/ending-preventable-maternal-mortality>

Possible Solutions

Educating communities, especially women, about maternal health, nutrition, and the importance of seeking healthcare can empower them to make informed decisions and seek timely medical assistance.

Ensuring access to skilled healthcare professionals, especially during pregnancy and childbirth, can significantly reduce maternal mortality. This includes expanding healthcare infrastructure and training healthcare workers.

Promoting regular antenatal check-ups and postnatal care is crucial. Early detection and management of complications can prevent maternal deaths. Educating women about the importance of seeking healthcare during and after pregnancy is essential.

Access to family planning services and contraception helps prevent unintended pregnancies, reducing the risk of maternal mortality. Education and awareness programs can encourage family planning and birth spacing.

Enhancing access to emergency obstetric care is critical for managing complications during childbirth. This involves ensuring that health facilities are equipped to handle emergencies and that transportation is available for women in remote areas.

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