

Launch of The Lancet Maternal Survival Series: Strategies prioritized to reduce maternal deaths

On September 28th The Lancet, one of world's leading medical journals published a landmark series of research papers on reducing the burden of maternal mortality in developing countries. This maternal survival series addresses the deaths of pregnant and recently pregnant women, who die from causes related to their pregnancy. The launch of the series took place at London on September 27. Dr. Richard Horton, Editor of The Lancet, Dr. Carine Ronsmans from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr. Oona Cambell from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Dr. Fransisco Songane, Director, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health spoke during the launch.

The series comprises five papers. The first paper of the series reveals that women in the poorest parts of the world are over 1000 times more likely to die from maternal causes than those in developed countries. The paper also highlights that the burden of maternal mortality in developing countries compared to developed countries constitutes the 'largest discrepancy of all public health statistics', and is considerably greater than differentials for child and newborn mortality. The second paper assesses the different strategies for reducing maternal mortality and concludes that the provision of professional care in a health centre is more effective than alternative approaches. The third paper looks at what is needed to scale-up professional care worldwide. The fourth paper highlights that in most low-income countries households pay far too great a share of the costs of maternal health services, or do not seek care because they cannot afford the costs. The paper also estimated that an additional US1 billion is needed in 2006 from donors and governments to scale up coverage of maternal health services and this should increase to US6.1 billion in 2015. The final paper in the series describes the broader context – what else is needed and how maternal survival impacts on other health targets – and presents a call for action in terms of strategy formulation; financial support; human resource development, deployment, and retention; and better monitoring system for tracking progress towards maternal survival. The series also comprise five comments. You can access the papers and comments through the following links. Please note that you need to register to The Lancet (<http://www.thelancet.com/>) before trying the web links. The registration, which is free of charge, will give you access to these articles and many other articles published by The Lancet.

Comments:

1. "Healthy motherhood: an urgent call to action" by Horton R - [Full Text](#)
2. "Safe motherhood initiative: 20 years and counting" by Starrs AM - [Full Text](#)
3. "Meeting MDG-5: an impossible dream?" by Rosenfield A, Maine D, Freedman L - [Full Text](#)
4. "Where is maternal and child health now?" by Lawn JE, Tinker A, Munjanja SP, Cousens S - [Full Text](#)
5. "An alternative strategy to reduce maternal mortality" Costello A, Azad K, Barnett S - [Full Text](#)

Series articles:

1. "Maternal mortality: who, when, where, and why" by Ronsmans C, Graham WJ, on behalf of The Lancet Maternal Survival Series steering group - [Summary](#) | [Full Text](#)
2. "Strategies for reducing maternal mortality: getting on with what works" by Campbell OM, Graham WJ, on behalf of The Lancet Maternal Survival Series steering group - [Summary](#) | [Full Text](#)
3. "Going to scale with professional skilled care" by Koblinsky M, Matthews Z, Hussein J, Mavalankar D, Mridha MK, Anwar I, Achadi E, Adjei S, Padmanabhan P, van Lerberghe W, on behalf of The Lancet Maternal Survival Series steering group - [Summary](#) | [Full Text](#)
4. "Mobilising financial resources for maternal health" by Borghi J, Ensor T, Somanathan A, Lissner C, Mills A, on behalf of The Lancet Maternal Survival Series steering group - [Summary](#) | [Full Text](#)
5. "Maternal health in poor countries: the broader context and a call for action" by Filippi V, Ronsmans C, Campbell OM, Graham WJ, Mills A, Borghi J, Koblinsky M, Osrin D - [Summary](#) | [Full Text](#)

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