



World Health Organization

Background Paper

Committee: World Health Organization

Topic B: Improving maternal and child health in developing countries.

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The issue of maternal and child health is still a big problem in many developing countries. Every year, millions of women and children suffer from diseases, complications, and deaths that could be prevented. This happens because of poverty, weak health systems, and poor access to medical care. Women face high risks during pregnancy, childbirth, and after giving birth, while newborns and young children often struggle with malnutrition, infections, and lack of vaccines. Even though there have been many global efforts to improve healthcare, the difference between rich and poor countries is still very large. The World Health Organization reports that most maternal and child deaths happen in low-income regions, where access to basic health care and education is very limited. This topic is important not only for medical reasons but also for human rights, because every mother and child deserves safe and quality care, and the chance to live a healthy life.

Efforts to improve maternal and child health began with the Millennium Development Goals, which tried to reduce the number of mothers and babies dying from preventable causes. Later, these goals became part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 3 focuses on ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all people. Global programs like the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030) aim to protect the rights of survival, development, and health. In 2017, the World Health Organization and UNICEF started the Network for Improving

Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health, which helps countries offer better health services and reduce deaths. However, many developing countries still have weak hospitals, not enough trained doctors or nurses, and a lack of equipment. Social problems like gender inequality, poverty, and isolation in rural areas also make it difficult for women to get medical help.

There are many connected causes of poor maternal and child health. Poverty is the biggest one, as it forces many women to give birth without professional help and causes children to grow up without proper food. Many pregnant women do not receive medical checkups, so problems like heavy bleeding, infections, or high blood pressure are not treated in time. For children, diseases such as pneumonia, malaria, and diarrhea continue to cause many deaths. The lack of clean water, good sanitation, and vaccines makes things even worse. Education is another important factor—many mothers don't know enough about hygiene, nutrition, or childcare. When families lack information or can't reach hospitals, small problems can become very serious.

Many organizations are working to change this situation. The World Health Organization and UNICEF have helped train midwives and health workers in local communities. The International Labor Organization and Plan International have supported families by teaching them about nutrition, sanitation, and safe childbirth. Japan's international agency, JICA, has created projects in Asia and Africa to promote safe delivery and health records for pregnant women. These programs show that teamwork and investment can really save lives. Still, there are big gaps, especially in poor and rural areas where hospitals are far away or too expensive. To fix this, countries must strengthen their healthcare systems and make sure that all people can access quality medical care.

To improve maternal and child health, governments should make sure that everyone has access to healthcare, improve service quality, and fight social inequalities. They

should invest more money in health programs, protect women's reproductive rights, and encourage family planning. Communities should also take part by teaching women about prenatal care, breastfeeding, and hygiene. International cooperation is very important too—countries can share technology, train doctors and nurses, and support poorer regions. Reducing gender inequality and poverty will also help mothers and children live healthier and safer lives.

Improving maternal and child health is a shared duty for the whole world. Stronger healthcare systems, better education, and more equality are key to reducing deaths and improving life for families everywhere. The goal should be to create global teamwork between countries, organizations, and communities to make sure every mother and child has the right to a healthy and dignified life.

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