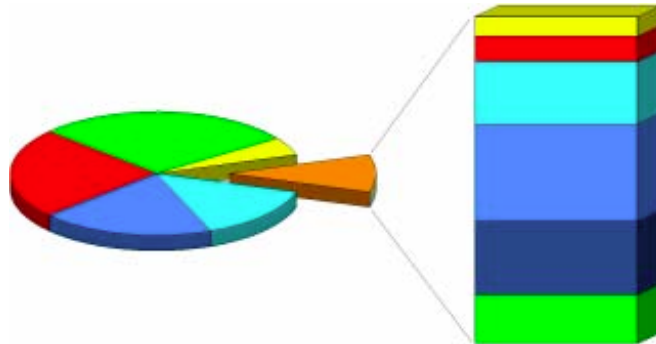


healthcare **SUNDAY** Heroes in healthcare

16 October 2005

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Statistics 2005 **NEW**



Caring for Mothers and Children

This year, the World Health Report focuses on making every mother and child count. So when you look at the following statistics, think of a mother or child close to you and imagine life without them. Be thankful for the work of midwives, paediatricians, health visitors, GPs, obstetricians, community nurses, child care specialists and assistants, gynaecologists, physiotherapists, speech therapists and all those who enable us to enjoy a high level of mother and child healthcare in this country.

?Children are the future of society and their mothers are guardians of that future. Yet this year, almost 11 million children under five years of age will die from causes that are largely preventable. Among them are 4 million babies who will not survive their first month of life. On top of that, 3,300,000 babies will be stillborn. At the same time, about half a million women will die in pregnancy, childbirth or soon after? WHO Report 2005

Over 300 million women in developing countries suffer each year from illness brought about by pregnancy and childbirth

The risk of mothers dying in childbirth is 1 in 16 in Africa. In Western Europe, its 1 in 2800.

The most common cause of maternal death is severe bleeding. Postpartum bleeding can kill even a healthy mother within two hours if unattended. The second most common cause is sepsis.

Around 100,000 maternal deaths could be avoided if women who did not want children used effective contraception.

More than 50% of all child deaths occur in just six countries: India, Pakistan, China, Congo, Ethiopia and Nigeria

Main causes of death in children under 5 are neonatal (37%), acute respiratory infections (19%), diarrhoeal diseases (17%), other non-communicable diseases (10%), malaria (8%), HIV/AIDS (3%) and injuries (3%).

Neonatal causes of death include: preterm birth (28%), severe infections (26%), birth asphyxia (23%), congenital abnormalities (8%) and tetanus (7%).

One in five African women loses a baby during her lifetime compared with 1 in 125 in Western Europe.

Poor or delayed care contributes to up to 70% of child deaths.

Nearly three quarters of all neonatal deaths could be prevented if women were adequately nourished and received appropriate care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.

Each year over a million children who survive birth asphyxia develop problems such as cerebral palsy, learning difficulties and other crippling disabilities.

Each year, it is estimated that around 100 million people are forced into poverty by catastrophic payments for healthcare.

There are currently 136 million births per year. In sub-Saharan Africa, 60% of women still give birth without a skilled attendant. Less than 25% of the needed human resources for obstetric care are available.

Projected staffing requirements for extending coverage of maternal and newborn care over the next ten years assumes the training of at least another 334,000 midwives or their equivalents and the upgrading of 140,000 health professionals who are currently providing first-level maternity care and 27,000 doctors who presently haven't got the skills required to provide back-up care.

Globally, the average number of children per woman is 2.7 compared with 4.9 forty years ago.

Over half of all child deaths occur in children who are underweight.

Around 2.2 million women living with HIV/AIDS give birth each year.

Around 50 million women living in malaria-endemic regions become pregnant. About 10,000 of these women die and 200,000 of their infants die as a result of malaria infection.

There are about 46 million induced abortions carried out each year of which 18 million are performed by people lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking minimal medical standards. Unsafe abortion causes 68,000 deaths per year

Life expectancy at birth in the UK is currently 76 for men and 81 for women. In Sierra Leone it is 37 for men and 39 for women. In Swaziland it is 33 for men.