The role of midwives in the prevention & management of childbirth injury: Catheterization and obstetric fistula

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The global burden of childbirth injury

• Maternal and newborn mortality has declined in the past decades. **However:**
  – Nearly 300,000 maternal deaths annually
  – 2 million intrapartum event-related stillbirths and early neonatal deaths
  – Minority of countries on track to achieve MDG 5

• “For every woman who dies in childbirth, 20 more suffer injury, infection, or disease.” (WHO)

• Obstructed labor is a major cause of maternal and newborn injury and death

• Obstetric fistula is among the most severe childbirth injuries
  – The vast majority of obstetric fistulas result from prolonged/obstructed labor, and most end in the death of the baby as well.
  – An estimated 50,000-100,000 fistulas occur each year, and 2 million are believed to be living with the condition (WHO)


Quality of care and neglected clinical skills

- Facility deliveries are increasing globally.
  - However, increasing evidence suggests that further reductions in maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity require **improvements in quality of care**.

- Maximizing the clinical skills and confidence of all health providers is a crucial part of quality of care improvement.

- There is a need to identify neglected clinical skills and design education and advocacy efforts to address them.
  - **Catheterization** by midwives may be an important example of such a skill.
  - Policies, facility capacity, and training may all hinder midwives’ ability to practice this skill.

Mathai M. To ensure maternal mortality is reduced, quality of care needs to be monitored and improved alongside increasing skilled delivery coverage rates. BJOG. 2011 Sep;118 Suppl 2:12-4.

Workshop objectives

1. Raising awareness about the role of catheterization in preventing and managing obstetric fistula

2. Identifying barriers and challenges to the wider use of this intervention

3. Generating action items to facilitate the use of this intervention and address identified barriers
Moving forward

Things to consider as you hear these presentations:

– What is needed to help increase midwives’ practice of catheterization for fistula prevention and treatment?
  • Research
  • Education
  • Practice

– What are challenges in expanding use of catheterization?
– What are opportunities in expanding use of catheterization?