

Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Maternal and Newborn Health Services

Gedefa Amenu

Department of Midwifery, Dilla University, Ethiopia

***Correspondence to:** Dr. Gedefa Amenu, Department of Midwifery, Dilla University, Ethiopia.

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The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19 has spread rapidly since emerging in late 2019, leading the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare the disease a global pandemic. Experts have been trying to respond to curb transmission of the virus and to provide care for the many who have been infected throughout the world.

There is no evidence of adverse effects COVID-19 on pregnant women. But the physical and immune system changes that occur during and after pregnancy should be taken into account. Undoubtedly; challenges of the outbreak will impose huge problem on the maternal and newborn health services due to the fact that the pandemic is affecting the health services delivery system. Especially; the impact of COVID-19 on maternal and newborn health will be very high for developing countries if the pandemic infection increased with current speed. Health service seekers are not visiting health facility due to fear of the pandemic, national and international lockdown, travel restrictions and economic slowdown.

Therefore, facilities deemed to provide essential services like maternal and new born services are reporting poor performance of services since COVID-19 pandemic declared. Some reporting are also showing that, home delivery is becoming practiced and there are unpublished evidences showing maternal and newborn death increased due the fact that emergency obstetric care is became delayed due to pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing adverse effects on the supply chain for maternal and newborn health medical commodities by delaying transportation of the equipment's. In addition, service providers involved

in provision of maternal and newborn health services may be mobilized to cover other suggested priority needs. So; limitation of skilled service providers faced, clinics may closed and people may be reluctant to go to health facilities. Governments are restricting people's movements to stem the spread of the virus, and providers are being forced to suspend services such as abortion care and outpatient departments like family planning unit stopped the service provision. Since reproductive health services like family planning and safe abortion services are halted, unintended pregnancies which forced the women to do unsafe abortion. Increase in an unsafe abortion in turn would result in increased maternal death. For example, the country lockdowns in Nepal and India have forced clinics operated by Marie Stopes International - the largest provider of family planning services in India outside of the public sector to close. In Ethiopia some the health facilities are stopped outpatient services including family planning and abortion care.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Consequences of COVID-19 pandemic for mother and newborn will be very high if possible concerted action is not taken timely. To avert the pandemic crisis against maternal and newborn health; governments and partner organization must take swift and decisive action. Antenatal, delivery, postnatal, sexual and reproductive health care like; family planning and abortion services should back. Therefore; ways to reach service seekers should be searched. Pregnant mother must get antenatal, delivery and postnatal care by any means possible like; home to home service provision through any possible media like mobile call or physically reaching the client home with necessary service materials. Necessary protective equipment (PPE) and service delivery material must be fulfilled for the service providers while providing the service.

Government must promote ways that the service seekers get essential services like maternal and newborn care. Facilities providing maternal and newborn care should restart the service with full potential as usual while service providers working at service delivery unit should fulfilled with necessary protective equipment. Donor organization must give due attention to maternal and newborn service at this critical time to minimize huge contribution of maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality by the pandemic.