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The Midwifery Services Framework: What is it, and why is it needed?

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Abstract:

Most low- and middle-income countries failed to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets for maternal, newborn and child health, and even more ambitious targets have been set under the Sustainable Development Goals and the Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality initiative. This means that many countries will need to accelerate progress on sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health over the next few years. Recent years have seen the publication of a large and convincing body of evidence about the potential of midwifery to make a significant contribution to this acceleration, but little practical guidance has emerged to help countries invest in midwifery services so that their health systems can meet the increasing need for sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health care. To help fill this gap, the International Confederation of Midwives designed and launched the Midwifery Services Framework, a new tool to guide countries through the process of strengthening and developing their midwifery services. This first of a series of three papers introduces the MSF, explains why it is needed, how it was developed, its guiding principles and its anticipated outcomes and impact. The other two papers explain the process of implementing the Midwifery Services Framework, and lessons learned in the first countries to start implementation.

Abbreviations

AAAQ, availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality; ERA, education, regulation, association; HRH, human resources for health; ICM, International Confederation of Midwives; MDG, millennium development goal; MMR, maternal mortality ratio (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births); MSF, Midwifery Services Framework; PMNCH, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; SDG, sustainable development goal; SRHR, sexual and reproductive health and rights; SRMNH, sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health; TWG, technical working group; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; WHO, World Health Organisation

Keywords

Midwifery; health workforce; sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health; human resources for health; sustainable development goals; universal health coverage

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