



# **Obstetrics Practice in 2019: A human rights approach**

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**MATERNAL HEALTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT**



**‘The question should not be why do women not accept the service we offer, but why do we not offer a service that woman will accept’**

**Mahmoud Fathalla**

# **Social determinants of health**

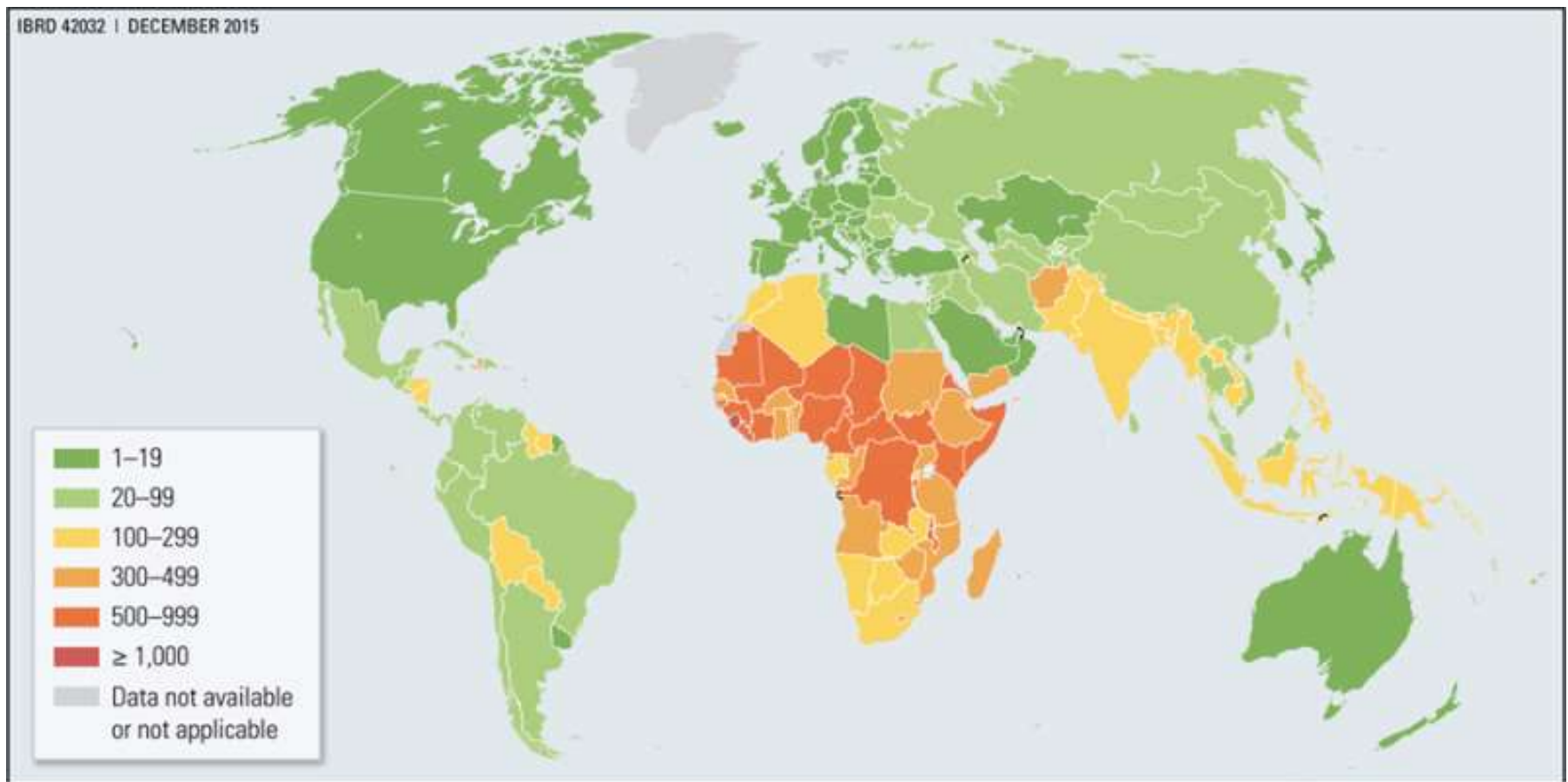
- **Socio-economic conditions**
- **Education**
- **Nutrition**
- **Access to healthcare**
- **Women's rights**

# Continuum of reproductive rights

- 1. Right to health**
- 2. Right to education**
- 3. Right to sexual choices**
- 4. Right to fertility**
- 5. Right to contraception**
- 6. Right to treatment of sexually transmitted diseases**
- 7. Right to antenatal care services**
- 8. Right to safe childbirth**
- 9. Right to safe surgery**
- 10. Right to post-natal care**

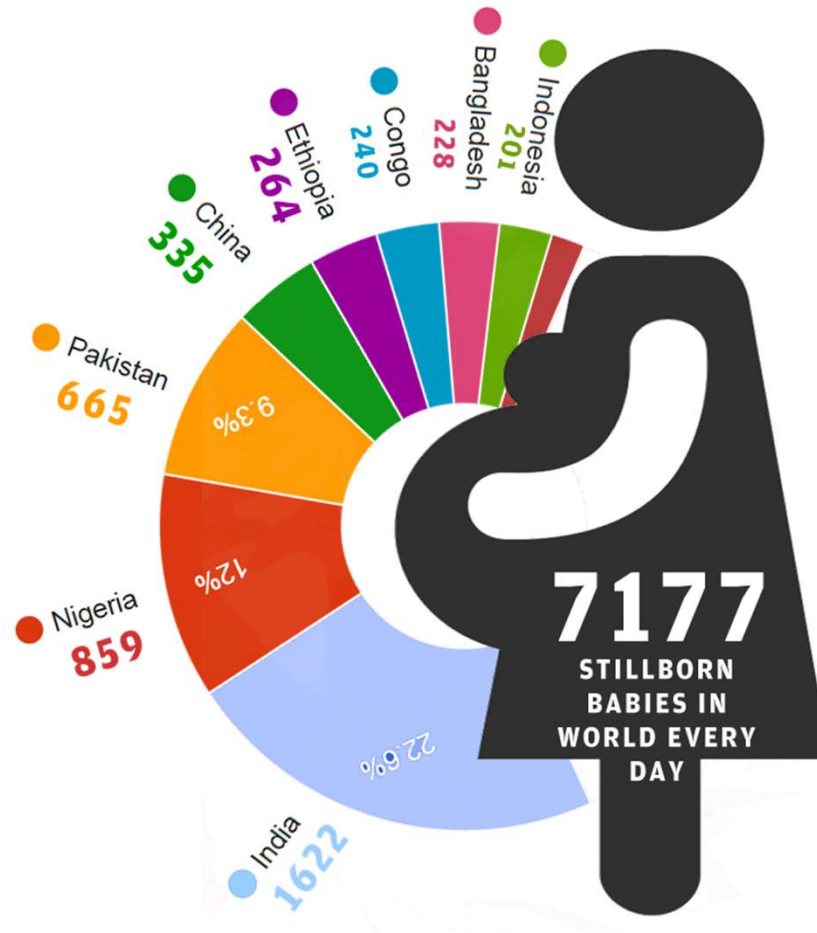
# Access to health

## Maternal mortality (2015)



# Access to health

## Stillbirths



# Access to health

- **Over 200 000 deaths a year occur as a result of an STI**
- **237 000 deaths occur as a result of cervical cancer (98% occurring in poorer countries)**

# Access to health

- **Poor nutrition contributes to adverse pregnancy outcomes**
- **40% of South Africans live below the poverty line**



# Access to health

- **Anaemia can increase the risk of maternal death from heart failure and augment consequences of obstetric haemorrhage**
- **There is an inverse relationship between calcium supplementation and pre-eclampsia**
- **Zinc and vitamin A deficiencies contribute to perinatal sepsis by impairing physiological response to infections**
- **Fetal growth trajectories may be affected by maternal nutrition**
- **Folate and vitamin B12 deficiencies can lead to neural tube defects**

# **Access to health**

- **Pregnancy reduces a women's income-generating potential and introduces new expenses**
- **A study compared pregnancy support grants in 27 countries and concluded that a pregnancy grant in SA would improve health outcomes for babies and mothers**
- **Recommendation for SA's child support grant to start in pregnancy**

# **Access to health**

## **Barriers**

- Lack of roads**
- Electricity and water cuts**
- Poor infrastructure**
- Lack of resources**
- Shortage of blood**
- Lack of ICU units and facilities**
- Shortage of oxygen**

# Education

**1 billion adults are illiterate (2/3 are women)**

- **Education reduces child mortality**
- **Education reduces fertility**
- **Education reduces maternal mortality**

# Education

**Access to education has proven to be the most cost-effective strategy to many health and societal problems**

**Educating girls and women has proven to have economic and social benefits**

# **Unmet need for contraception**

- **215 million women have an unmet need for contraception**
- **Almost half of the 200 million pregnancies that occur each year are unwanted or ill-timed**
- **About 42 million pregnancies end in abortion globally annually**
- **Meeting the need for contraception would reduce unintended pregnancies by 71%**

# **Sexually transmitted infections**

**Many women are often denied the right to knowledge and treatment for STI's**

## **Disorders associated with STIs**

- **HIV**
- **PID**
- **Cervical cancer**
- **Infertility**
- **Adverse pregnancy outcomes**

# Fertility

**Couples have a right to conceive and to decide on**

- **Spacing of children**
- **Quantity of children**
- **Quality of the children**
- **Non-coital reproduction**

**Are costs of ART not infringing on rights of women who cannot afford?**

# **Sexual choices**

## **Recognition of groups at risk of sexual abuse and discrimination**

- **Adolescents**
- **Women with mental retardation**
- **Substance abusers**
- **Refugees and foreign nationals**
- **Lesbian women**

# **Reproductive choices**

**Roe v Wade US Law 1973**

**Constitutional right to make the profoundly important and personal decision whether or not to terminate a pregnancy**

# **Reproductive choices**

**Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, Georgia**

**Abortion has been approved once a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can happen as early as the sixth week of pregnancy**

# Reproductive Choices

## Missouri

**Missouri's governor signed into law a strict anti-abortion bill that prohibits abortions after eight weeks of pregnancy.**

CNN

# Reproductive choices

## **The Alabama law**

**The Alabama law would make performing an abortion at any stage of pregnancy a felony punishable by up to 99 years or life in prison for the abortion provider. The only exception would be when the woman's health is at serious risk.**

# Reproductive choices

**ROME — Pope Francis said Saturday that abortion was always unacceptable, regardless of whether a fetus is fatally ill or has pathological disorders.**

**He also urged doctors to help women bring to term even pregnancies likely to end in the death of a child at birth or soon after.**

**“Is it legitimate to take out a human life to solve a problem?”**

**“Is it permissible to contract a hitman to solve a problem?”**

**New York Times, 25 May 2019**

# Reproductive choices

## South Africa

**More than 100 000 abortions took place between 2016 and 2017**

**There is a real stigma that has been placed on women who have abortions**

**25 million South African women have had illegal or backstreet abortions**

**Less than 1/10 women in SA have abortions in health care facilities**

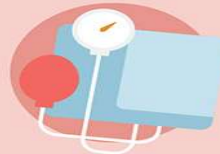
**News 24, 5 November 2018**

# Antenatal Care

## Quality antenatal care will:



Encourage women to seek **skilled care at childbirth**



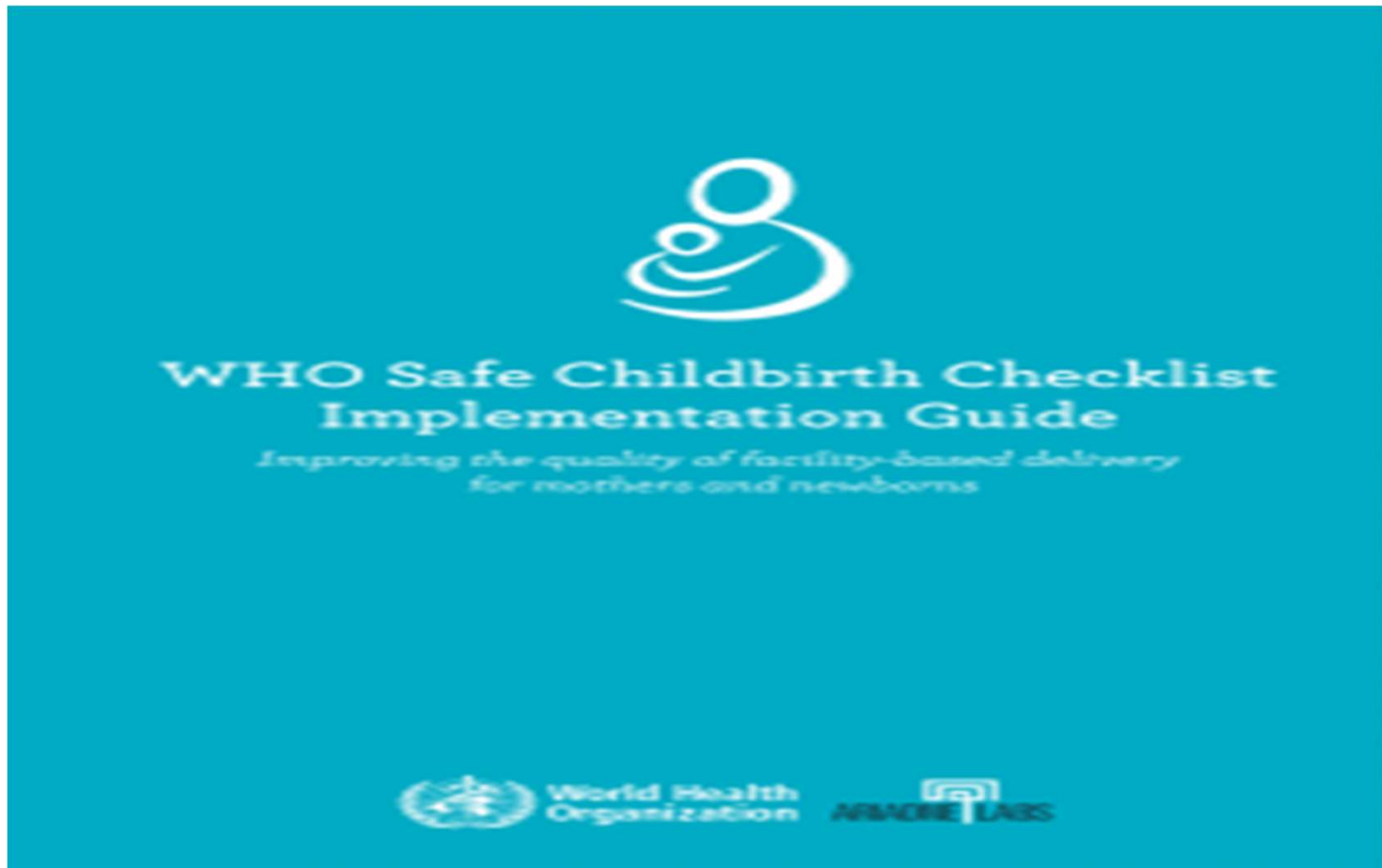
**Reduce stillbirths,** childbirth complications and newborn deaths



**Help women get care and counselling** for HIV, malaria, TB and other conditions

Quality antenatal care should be available for all women to ensure a positive pregnancy experience.

# Safe childbirth



# Safe Surgery

CNN

Live TV



## **African mothers 50 times more likely to die after c-section than moms in rich countries, study says**

By Katie Hunt and Columbus S. Mavhunga, CNN

Updated 7:30 PM EDT, Thu March 14, 2019



# Postnatal care

- **Less than 30% of women in developing countries receive postnatal care**
- **More than 90% of women in developed countries receive postnatal care**
- **Majority of maternal deaths occur in the postnatal period**

# **Maternal mental health**

## **Factors that affected mental health in pregnant women**

- **Intimate partner violence**
- **Unemployment**
- **Food insecurity**

**Food insecurity doubled the chance of pregnant woman developing depression or an anxiety disorder.**

**Mental health disorders which occur in 20 – 40% of pregnant women in poor communities often go unattended**

# Respectful Maternal Care (WHO)

	<b>Disrespect and abuse</b>	<b>Corresponding right</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Physical abuse</b>	<b>Freedom from harm and ill-treatment</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Non-consented care</b>	<b>Right to information, informed consent and refusal, and respect for choices and preferences, including companionship during maternity care</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Non-confidential care</b>	<b>Confidentiality, privacy</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Non-dignified care</b>	<b>Dignity, respect</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Discrimination based on specific attributes</b>	<b>Equality, freedom from discrimination, equitable care</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Abandonment or denial of care</b>	<b>Right to timely healthcare, and to the highest attainable level of health</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Detention in facilities</b>	<b>Liberty, autonomy, self-determination, and freedom from coercion</b>

# **FIGO Human Rights Charter**

## **Integrated Human Rights and Women's Health**

- 1. Life**
- 2. Health**
- 3. Privacy**
- 4. Confidentiality**
- 5. Autonomy and decision-making**
- 6. Information**
- 7. Non-discrimination**
- 8. Decide upon number and spacing of children**
- 9. Freedom from torture, inhumane and degrading treatment**
- 10. Benefit from scientific progress**

# What is an human rights approach to obstetrics in 2019



# Case Study

**23 year old walks to Mary at 39 weeks walks 4km for her antenatal appointment at 4am**

**Ruptures membranes on the way**

**Ambulance which arrives 2 hours later**

**At the hospital the midwife Mary asks why she is in South Africa when she comes from Zimbabwe**

**Mary has a cord prolapse, is rushed to theatre but delivers a stillbirth**

**She develops major depression 6 months later and attempts suicide**

# **A human rights approach**

## **Direct**

- **Maternity care that will give every woman a dignified experience**
- **Access to comprehensive healthcare**
- **A patient-centred approach**
- **Maternal mental health and postnatal care**

## **Indirect**

- **Infrastructure and resources**
- **Food security**
- **Advocacy for quality healthcare and access to education for all women**

# Resources

- **WHO**
- **FIGO**
- **White ribbon alliance**
- **Lancet commission on global surgery**

