

# Course 6

## Reducing Maternal Deaths: Selecting Priorities, Tracking Progress

### COURSE GUIDE

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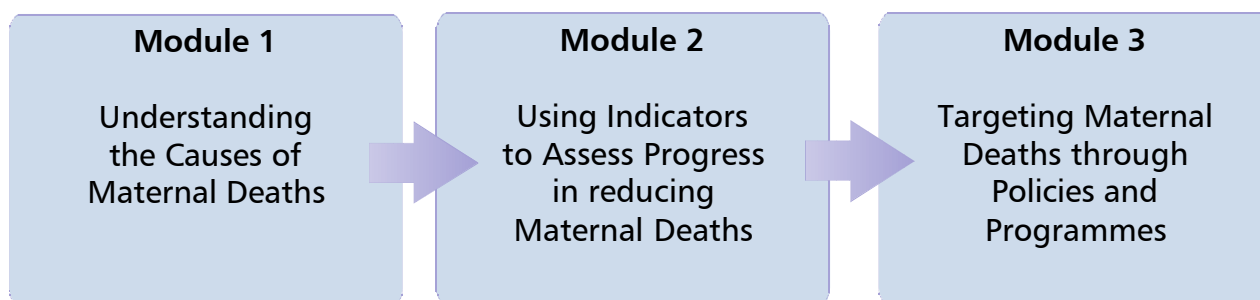
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# 1. Introduction

Welcome to this Distance learning course on Maternal Deaths, "Reducing Maternal Deaths: Selecting Priorities, Tracking progress". It is one of six courses which make up the UNFPA Project on "Distance Learning System on Population Issues"

The Course Team have estimated that the average length of time you will take to study the course will be around 40 hours. Normally people find that it is possible to study such a course at the rate of about 5-7 hours per week so you should expect your study to take about 7-8 weeks. The Course Team have split the course up into three modules as shown in Figure 1. The length of each module in terms of estimated study time will be indicated to you before you start, to help you plan your study sessions.

**Figure 1. The three modules of the course.**



The course has been designed to be in a printed format. References for further reading are given if you wish to work beyond the material in the course. There are three assignments associated with this course, given in the appropriate handbook. You should attempt these assignments, one after the completion of each module and submit your work to your Tutor for marking.

Each module of the course is preceded by a list of learning objectives, which detail what you should be able to do after your study of that module. To help you test your progress you will find self-assessment questions (SAQs) at various points in the materials. They are there to help you to be sure that you have understood the preceding material. The answers to the SAQs are given at the end of the module. When you encounter an SAQ you should write down the answer before you look at the solution. Just thinking the answer through does not serve the same function as writing it down, and is less effective in helping you to remember the material.

The course also contains case studies based on real situations. The case studies are there to give examples which I hope will illustrate and bring the text to life.

The Course Team have tried to make the materials as clear as possible but it is inevitable that you will find some parts harder to understand than others. Indeed you may want extra help and this is where the tutor support services will aid you. When you are studying the material, try to find somewhere quiet and comfortable to work. If possible, try to study for periods of between 1 and 1 ½ hours to avoid loss of concentration. Reflect on the content of the material as you read it, try to think about examples from your own experience, which are similar to those given in the text.

The Course Team has tried to write this course to meet a wide range of different needs. Although you may come from different backgrounds, with different experiences of maternal deaths, it is probable that your reasons for studying this course are similar to other students: to learn more about the reasons for maternal deaths and to be able to help in reducing them.

In addition the course is designed to give you the opportunity to draw on your own previous experience and to learn from other people's experiences through case studies.

## 2. Course aims

The aims below are expressed in terms of what I want to teach you during the course.

**To:**

- Aim 1.** Understand the central role of emergency obstetric care in reducing maternal deaths
- Aim 2.** Use Process Indicators to measure progress in reducing maternal deaths
- Aim3.** Analyze policies and improve programme design to address maternal deaths.

## 3. Course Objectives

The objectives of the course and its separate modules define what you should be able to do after you have studied it. Each objective will have at least one Self-Assessment Question (SAQ) associated with it in the course text.

### Module 1

**Aim:** **Understand the central role of emergency obstetric care in reducing maternal deaths**

**Objectives:** At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain these terms - maternal death, maternal mortality, maternal morbidity, maternal mortality ratio, maternal mortality rate, lifetime risk, professional midwives, traditional birth attendants, essential obstetric care, and emergency obstetric care (EmOC).
2. List the five main direct causes of maternal deaths
3. Explain why most serious obstetric complications are not predictable or preventable
4. Explain why community-based initiatives alone are not sufficient to reduce maternal deaths
5. Show how lack of EmOC sustains a high incidence of maternal deaths
6. Show how availability of EmOC reduces maternal deaths
7. List some differences between maternal mortality and infant mortality
8. Understand the reasons for the continued high rate of maternal mortality in developing countries

### Module 2

**Aim:** **Use Process Indicators to measure progress in reducing maternal deaths**

**Objectives:** At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Define the following terms: indicators, impact indicators, process indicators, Basic Emergency Obstetric Care (EmOC), Comprehensive EmOC, Met Need for EmOC, case fatality rate, needs assessment, and participatory group discussions.
2. Understand the issues involved in measuring maternal deaths

3. Explain the difference between impact and process indicators
4. Give the reasons why impact indicators are not practical for monitoring interventions to reduce maternal deaths
5. Give examples of the questions that can be answered by using Process Indicators
6. Use Process Indicators to choose appropriate intervention strategies
7. Use Process Indicators to track progress in reducing maternal deaths

## Module 3

### Aim:

**Analyze policies and improve programme design to address maternal deaths.**

### Objectives:

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Identify the elements in a sample Safe Motherhood policy that will contribute to reducing maternal deaths
2. Compare selected interventions in terms of strategic resource allocation
3. Give examples of policies that can act as barriers to the provision of EmOC
4. Conduct needs assessments to identify the factors that prevent use of EmOC
5. Understand the reasons for the 3 Delays that lead to maternal deaths
6. Identify the components of programmes to reduce maternal deaths
7. Choose priorities for programme interventions
8. Plan the phasing and timing of a programme to address maternal deaths
9. Explain why it is important to ensure the standard of EmOC is adequate before mobilizing the community to use EmOC
10. Select indicators to monitor the programme

## 4. Course structure and contents

The course comprises a number of printed workbooks containing the three modules, this course guide and some

assessment material. The workbooks contain structured, activity-based teaching material and are the most important components of the course. You should now have a quick look through the printed workbooks and assessment handbook.

The written material is structured so that you can work through it at your own speed and at times when it is convenient to you. You will find that it contains many Case Studies and Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs). The SAQs are there to help you measure your learning against the course objectives. Convenient places to break your study off are given in the text.

## 5. Working with a Tutor

This Distance Learning Course is produced as a result of collaboration between UNFPA and Columbia University School of Public Health's Averting Maternal Death and Disability (AMDD) Program. UNFPA is also producing five other courses on population and reproductive health issues in this Distance Learning Series, and is establishing a system of tutor assistance. AMDD, which supports projects to avert maternal death in close to 50 countries, is distributing this course to its national and international partners for their own use.

UNFPA staff and partners will get support from a Tutor, who will get in touch with you, probably by e-mail, at or before the time that you start to work on the material to explain the support she or he is able to offer you. This may consist of face-to-face tutorials, individual telephone and e-mail help. In the majority of cases the Tutor support you receive will be by e-mail and computer conference. Contact your Tutor whenever you need help. Your Tutor will respond to your questions and do all he or she can to help you. Make sure that you are able to receive and send e-mail as soon as possible and that the course administrators know your mail address.

AMDD partners are encouraged to form study groups to discuss the material and to support self-learning. You can also seek advice and assistance from the AMDD project monitor as and when necessary. In addition, you can contact the UNFPA office in your country to see if it is possible for you to register for this course, thereby taking advantage of the UNFPA system of tutor support and receiving the course completion certificate that will be issued for UNFPA staff and partners.

## 6. Assessment

There are three assignments to be completed by UNFPA staff and partners who register for the course. All of them are written pieces of work which you are expected to complete and send to your Tutor. The first two assignments are 'formative'. This means they will be used to help you by giving you Tutor feedback on your work. These comments will indicate where your answers could have been improved. The formative interaction with your Tutor is very important, so make sure that you undertake all three pieces of assessment.

The third assignment will cover all the material in the course. All three assignments must be completed. Candidates who complete all three assignments will receive a certificate of course completion.

## 7. Getting Started

If you have read and understood this guide, the next step is to start to work on the course materials. Start with Module 1 and keep in mind the advice given in this guide.

**Good luck with your study of this course.**

## 8. Student Assessment Handbook

### Note to Students

This handbook contains three assignments, written to test your understanding of the course material. They are not compulsory, so you can choose whether to do them or not. Assignments 1 and 2 are 'Formative' in that feedback will be given to you by your Tutor after the marking. This feedback will assist your understanding of the course material and help you prepare for the final assignment. You will be informed of your mark for each submitted assignment. This mark will otherwise be confidential to your Tutor and the Centre in Turin.

You must submit all three assignments on this course to earn a certificate of course completion, which will be sent to you after you have completed the course. No Pass/Fail classification will be used.

Each assignment should be undertaken by you, working alone. You may make use of the course materials in attempting them. Each one should then be submitted to your Tutor by e-mail for marking by the 'cut-off' dates specified.

Assignments 1 and 2 should take you around 1 hour each to complete and the Final Assignment around 1 1/2 hours.

### Assignment 1, (based on Module 1)

**50 marks**

#### Question

Define maternal death, and, in your own words, discuss this statement: Emergency Obstetric Care is said to be central to the reduction of maternal death.

Write around 500 words, making reference to:

1. The main causes of maternal death
2. The prediction of obstetric complications
3. The prevention of obstetric complications
4. Distribution and availability of health services
5. Community based initiatives



## Assignment 2, (Based on Module 2)

50 marks

### Question 1

Name two impact indicators for maternal mortality. Discuss their strengths and limitations.

### Question 2

Name four Process Indicators of the availability and use of EmOC. Discuss their strengths and limitations, in your own words.

## Final assignment, (Based on all three Modules)

100 marks

### Question 1

Which of the 3 scenarios in Module 2 is most like the situation in your own country or province? Explain your choice and any differences between your chosen scenario and your own country or province.

### Question 2

Give examples of policies that could be barriers to EmOC. Are there any policies or lack of policies in your country, which could be barriers to EmOC? Justify your answer in around 400 words

### Question 3

Setting priorities is crucial to the design of effective programmes for the reduction of maternal deaths. Discuss this statement in the context of the 3 Delays. Your answer should be around 400 words.