
United Nations Development Fund for Women

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Encouraging the improvement of health care in order to reduce child mortality rates in developing nations

Report of the Chair

I. Statement of the problem

1. Child mortality is a significant problem in developing nations. Child mortality refers to the death of a person within the first five years of life. Approximately 9 million children per year die from preventable causes (most of these deaths occurring in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia) [3]. Additionally, children in developing nations do not have access to proper medical care which leads to many health issues [5].

2. The most affected region in the world is Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes all nations south of the Sahara Desert. It is home to one fifth of the children under age five in the world and accounts for half of the child deaths in the world. Roughly 43 percent of these deaths are caused by diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea and AIDS. Another cause for the lack of improvement is the inconsistent funding for and distribution of immunizations. Immunizations are used to combat measles and drastically reduced the number of deaths related to it, but without consistent funding, the measles could easily reclaim power and in turn increase child mortality rates[3].

3. The lack of proper health care and sanitation in developing nations is one of the main causes of these high mortality rates. Lack of sanitation is a huge issue because diseases can easily be spread through contaminated water and other things of that nature. Then, when people get sick there is little help for them. 80 percent of the health care in developing nations occurs in the home. This proves to be an issue because the residents of these homes dont have enough medical knowledge to adequately care for the sick in their homes. Because these nations dont have access to proper medical facilities, tools, and education, medical practices are often performed within the homes of the affected people. This often results in death[3][4].

4. Lack of maternal health care is also a very significant obstacle to tackle in order to reduce child mortality rates. Expectant mothers need to be taken into account when discussing this issue. Any illness that the mother may have during her 9 month term could potentially hurt the child. Another huge issue is the fact that each year, 50 million women give birth at home without professional assistance. This can be an issue for several reasons: the sanitary conditions within the home are inadequate, and no one is able to detect any medical issues of the child (if present at all). If the child makes does live through the birthing period the mother may still have a negative effect on the baby if diseases are spread through the process of breast-feeding[2].

II. History of the problem

5. In 2004 the Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation was established to monitor progress, and since its establishment, the facts and figures regarding infant mortality have been more accurate and have helped the UN to track progress. The Millennium Development Goal to reduce child mortality rates by two thirds by 2015 was established, but the average of reduction as of 2009 is only roughly 28 percent [1].

6. In 2005, the Global Health Council met and discussed further action. They recommended that international organizations and donors put forth 5.1 million dollars per year for child health programs, prioritize in region where death rates are highest, and emphasize the importance of maternal and newborn health [2].

7. Immunizations were also found to reduce death rate by at least 1 million per year. vaccination programs in regions like Southern Africa almost eliminated the cases of measles within four years. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative have contributed to drastically reduce child deaths and reduced the number of polio cases [2].

8. With new implications, there have been a few countries who have successfully reduced their child mortality rate to meet Millennium Development Goal. Egypt, Vietnam and Bangladesh have all reduced their child mortality rates by expanding immunization programs within their countries. Cambodia has also met the Millennium Development Goal by pushing the importance of breast-feeding and educating their citizens about its benefits [3].

III. Potential Resolutions

9. The chair suggests that potential solutions include:

- ideas for educational programs in which people learn basic health and sanitation practices
- ideas to increase and regulate immunization programs
- sources of consistent funding
- consideration of what successful nations have implemented in order to reduce mortality rates

IV. Position and Research Tips

10. There are several questions to consider while addressing this topic:
- What is the history of the child mortality rate in your country?
 - What is the quality of the health care system in your country?
 - How has your country combated child mortality?
 - Has your country participated in any organization to reduce child mortality?

Useful Web Sources

11. These websites may be helpful while conducting research:
- <www.un.org>
 - <www.unifem.com>
 - <www.cia.gov>
 - <www.nytimes.com>
 - <www.bbc.com.uk>
 - <www.economist.com>
 - <www.state.gov>
 - <www.washingtonpost.com>

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