

Maternity Today



WHAT MIDWIVES WANT

MAY 5 - MAY 31, 2021

#WHATMIDWIVESWANT SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

#WhatMidwivesWant is a safe environment to preserve the basic universal right to maternal health. In the month of May, Maternity Today will be focusing on drawing attention to the needs of midwives in the forefront of the pandemic, along with intersections that impede maternal and newborn health such as gender-based violence and female genital mutilation. Supporting **Midwives at the forefront of the Pandemic** is supporting women's rights around the world.

1 MIDWIVES & COVID-19

The impact of Covid-19 in rural areas is detrimental to women and children. Women have a hard time accessing healthcare for fear of contracting the virus. Unintended pregnancies are occurring, because women are fearful of being exposed to the virus at healthcare facilities where contraceptives are dispensed. This fear largely leads to inaction, resulting in undesirable outcomes, eg. stillbirth, neonatal and maternal death (1).

Maternity services must be established in locations closer to where women live allowing for easier healthcare access.

Midwives must be supported to continue to provide community-based care when centralized services are overloaded.

2 MIDWIVES & GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) has increased during Covid-19 all around the world(2). Global leaders have labeled the increase of sexual and gender-based violence as a "pandemic within a pandemic." The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that 6 months of lockdowns could result in an additional 31 million cases of GBV (2).

Currently, GBV services are not deemed a priority, because resources and services are used for Covid-19 relief. Additionally, survivors are reluctant to visit healthcare facilities due to fear of contracting the virus (2).

Services must be allocated for GBV survivors, providing physical and psychological aid, access to shelters, and quality medical care while

combatting the threat of Covid-19 to vulnerable people.

3 MIDWIVES & FGM

An estimated 140 million girls and women worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), an acknowledged violation of human rights, and at least two million girls are at risk of some form of the procedure annually. Midwives offer support and counselling for girls and women experiencing FGM related health problems; however, midwives face obstacles due to cultural, traditional, and religious beliefs surrounding FGM. Women further delay seeking medical aid due to lack of money, shame and embarrassment (3).

With the majority of medical aid going toward Covid-19 relief, women and girls face an additional lack in care. Moreover, prolonged lockdowns disrupt and delay programmes to end FGM, leading to an increase of cases (4).

WEEKLY THEMES

4 COVID-19

The Covid-19 Pandemic has placed a heightened strain on medical services around the world, and women-centred, midwifery-led care is more at risk than ever.

Midwives must be provided with PPE regardless of work environment, along with proper training for correct PPE usage. It is especially important to include midwives in policy, decision-making, planning and response to Covid-19. Also important is the prioritizing of funding for maternal health services and resources for midwives' associations, supporting midwives and providing community-based health care and continually working to reach the most vulnerable. Upholding women's sexual and reproductive rights including guarantee of positive birthing experiences is essential even in the time of a global pandemic. (5).

Sources:

1. "The Impact of Covid-19 on Midwives' Practice in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania: A Reflective Account" Pallangyo, et. al, Midwifery, 2020.
2. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Services for People Affected by Sexual and Gender-Based Violence" Johnson et. al, Gynecology & Obstetrics, 2020.
3. "Midwives' Experiences in Providing Care and Counselling to Women with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Related Problems." Isman et. al, Obstetrics and Gynecology International, 2013.
4. "Human Rights During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Issue of Female Genital Mutilations." Bellizzi et. al, Public Health, 2020.
5. "Protecting Midwives to Sustain Care for Women, Newborns and their Families in the COVID-19 Pandemic" International Confederation of Midwives, 2020.

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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This kit is intended as a tool to help promote global midwifery, as well as to raise awareness of the work they do and the obstacles they face during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Use the toolkit and hashtags to start a conversation on social media!

[Click here to download the advocacy visuals for May to share on your social media](#)

1 MIDWIVES & COVID-19

- COVID-19 has further decreased the global shortage of midwives, costing many lives along the way. Invest in midwives and put an end to preventable deaths #Midwives #MidwivesSaveLives #BetterBirths @wraglobal @maternityww @worldmidwives
- Midwives must be supported to continue providing community-based care when centralized services are overloaded due to COVID-19 #WhatMidwivesWant #MidwivesMatter #Midwifery @WHO @worldmidwives
- Funding for maternal health services should be prioritized allowing for the support of midwives and community-based healthcare #WhatMidwivesWant #BetterBirths @WHO @maternityww @UNFPA

2 MIDWIVES & GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- Midwives are facing an extreme amount of gender-based violence and abuse. Midwives deserve better policies, protection and pay #EndGBV #Midwifery #GlobalMidwives
- Midwives are essential to ending gender-based violence. What needs to be done? Services must be allocated for GBV survivors, proper access to shelter and quality medical care while providing physical and psychological aid #WhatMidwivesWant #MaternalHealth @WHO @SaveTheChildren
- #Midwives are trusted health professional and have an essential role in supporting and caring for victims of GBV #MidwivesSaveLives #Midwifery #MidwivesMatter @maternityww @WRAGlobal

SAMPLE POSTS





3 MIDWIVES & FGM

- Midwives are essential to sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls #Midwives #WhatMidwivesWant #MidwivesSaveLives @savethechildren @worldmidwives @UN_EWEC
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a violation of human rights and must never be performed #EndFGM #WhatMidwivesWant #MaternalHealth @SaveTheChildren @HealthyNewborns @aliveandthrive
- Midwives offer support and counselling for girls and women experiencing FGM related health problems, however they face obstacles due to cultural, religious, and traditional beliefs surrounding FGM #EndFGM #WhatMidwivesWant @maternityww @UN_EWEC
- Midwives against FGM #EndFGM #MidwivesSaveLives #BetterBirths

4 COVID-19

- Midwives have the right to full access for all personal protective equipment (PPE) #COVID19 #Midwives #WhatMidwivesWant #MidwivesMatter @WHO @UNICEF @UNFPA
- The impact of COVID-19 in rural areas is detrimental to women and children. Maternity services must be established in locations closer to where women live allowing for easier access to healthcare #WhatMidwivesWant #MaternalHealth #GlobalMidwives
- #Midwives must be provided with PPE regardless of work environments along with proper training for correct PPE usage #WhatMidwivesWant #MidwivesMatter @WRAGlobal @PMNCH @UNICEF
- #Midwives need to be included in policy creation, decision-making, planning and response to COVID-19 #WhatMidwivesWant #MidwivesMatter @worldmidwives

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#ContinuityofCare
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For questions or queries please contact: info@maternitytoday.org



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RESILIENCY IN MIDWIFERY: PERUTH MWESIGWA MBAZE



Peruth Mwesigwa Mbaze, 58, is a registered midwife, nurse, and senior nursing officer in Mbarara, Uganda. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Health. Peruth works as a mentor for multiple organizations, a clinic instructor for Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and serves as the Chairperson of the Midwives Association of Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital.

With over 30 years of hands-on and practical experience in midwifery and nursing, Peruth is passionate about and committed to the delivery of antenatal services, family planning, immunization and management of different stages of labour. Peruth is dedicated to working with communities in Mbarara and Uganda's western region and advocating for an end to teenage pregnancies, as well as preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence.

As an essential worker, Peruth exemplified her resilience, passion and commitment during the Covid-19 Pandemic, working tirelessly on the frontline, providing mothers, newborns and children with quality and lifesaving maternal and child health services.

In Ethiopia over 1 in every 250 pregnancies results in the death of the mother, and 1 in 30 the death of a newborn baby. While the Ethiopian government is working to ensure access to care during childbirth, many expectant mothers do not take advantage of care and facilities due to a lack of knowledge within communities. Greater community awareness is needed to reduce tragic and preventable death.

Thanks to Global Affairs Canada and many supportive artists, Music for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (M4-MNCH) produced a song and music video, "Lib Yaleh: If You Have a Heart," highlighting the importance of proper care before and after delivery. M4-MNCH hopes the video will raise awareness and convince mothers and fathers to visit clinics and gain midwife support whenever possible. M4-MNCH is looking to work with Farm Radio to deliver the song via radio to rural communities that might not have internet access.

M4-MNCH's incredible campaign initiative your support to deliver their message to families so it can become a means for education in the developing world. Watch the video, listen to the message, donate if you are able, and help us raise awareness together!

LIB YALEH "IF YOU HAVE A HEART"



Still from video.

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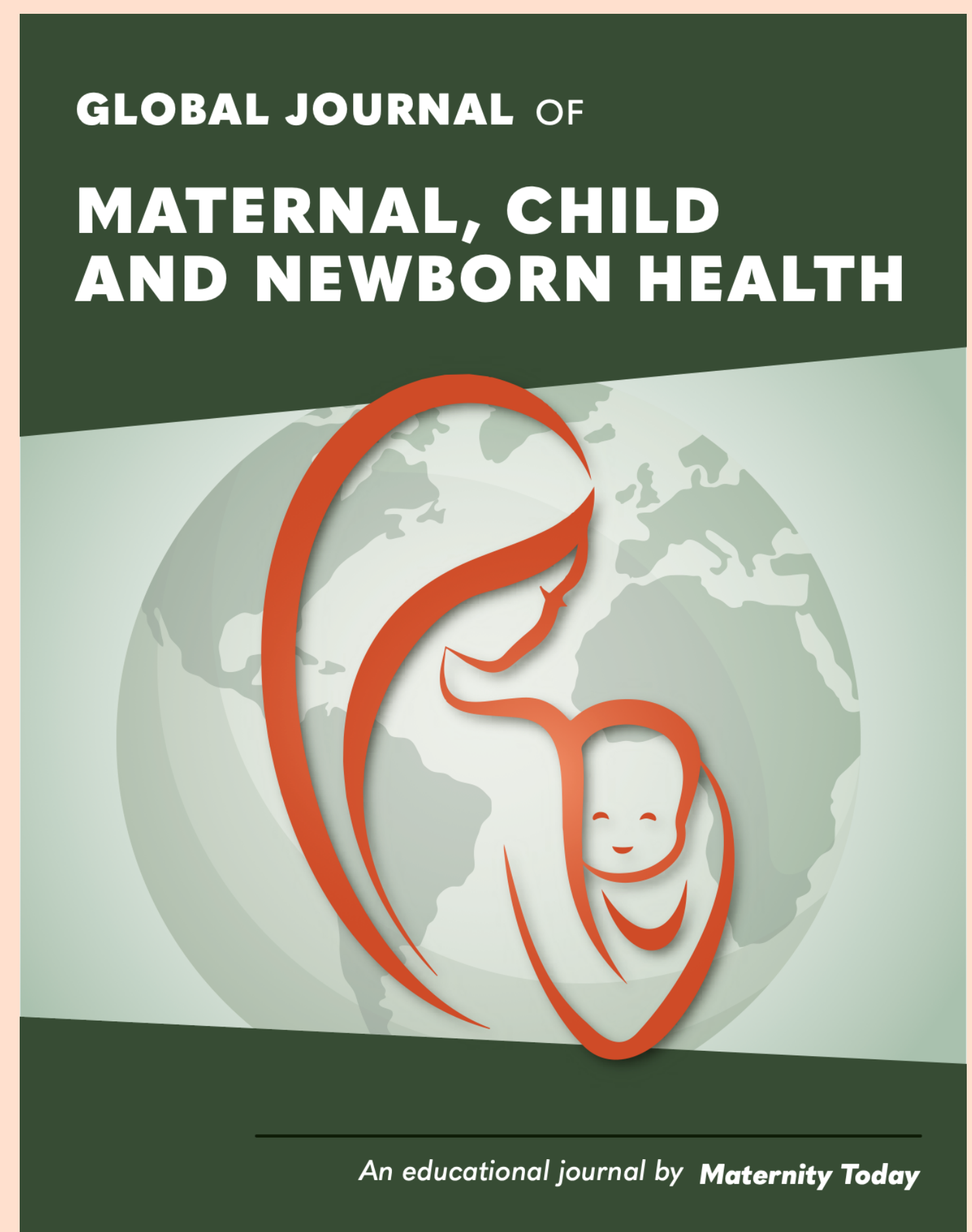
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GLOBAL JOURNAL OF MATERNAL, CHILD AND NEWBORN HEALTH

The Global Journal of Maternal, Child and Newborn Health is a startup online periodical that is an ambitious new project from Maternity Today. Sharing research and education to promote women's health issues along with newborns and children is essential to improving and promoting health around the world. The team at Maternity Today is working to create a scientific journal where both seasoned and new researchers have a cost-free forum to share their hard work and opinions without the burden of additional costs. By removing costs involved with submissions and publication, we are hoping to encourage and foster new talent, especially in the developing world. Our team and content will respect the values, beliefs, knowledge, our local partners, contributors, and diverse audience—providing a new perspective in the field.

Maternity Today is now accepting submissions of articles and research. If you're interested in joining our team or submitting your research for publication, please reach out to us at info@maternitytoday.org.



IMPACTS

- Maternity Today has been involved in research projects in developing countries
- Community Need Assessment conducted among 12 hospitals in Ethiopia
- Organized 7 awareness webinars on Covid-19 in collaboration with Ethiopian Medical Students Association
- Maternity Today conducted clinical training of pre- and in-service health care providers, aiming to increase the quantity and quality of skilled birth attendants
- More than 150 Midwives involved in the advocacy and awareness
- 420 Midwives participated in #WhatMidwivesWant campaign
- 1200 professionals involved in the Maternal Mental Health campaign