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National Skills Training Centre in India

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Abstract

A key determinant which can ensure the quality of healthcare in public health institutions is the skill set of the individuals providing service delivery. Health professionals possess the skills and the expertise in this respect; however, they fail to utilize these optimally. This is because there is a disconnect between their knowledge and practice, it is now imperative to bridge the gap between basic education and clinical practice. The creation of skill labs is one way in which this gap can be addressed. Though India has seen a decline in both the Maternal and Infant Mortality Rates, significant changes are yet to be made to bring about uniformity in maternal and child health care throughout the country. In order to make health professionals adhere to uniform practice standard that would enhance maternal and child health, representatives from the Government of India, have taken up the challenge of establishing skill labs across the country. In order to carry this endeavor forward, the Government of India (Maternal and Health division) has collaborated with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). Five nodal centers for the establishment of skill labs were subsequently established: Jamia Hamdard, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI), Safdarjung Hospital and Lady Harding Medical College (LHMC).

Keywords

Skill labs; Training; Midwifery; Simulation; Maternal mortality

Introduction

The Global Burden of Disease Study estimates that in 2013 about 2,92,982 maternal deaths occurred.⁸ A woman in a developing country is 97 times more likely to die from pregnancy related cause than a woman in a developed country. The majority of these deaths occur during and immediately following birth: 25% are caused by severe bleeding, 15% by infection, 13% due to unsafe abortion and 12% by eclampsia (a seizure disorder). The remaining deaths are due to obstructed labor (8%), and other direct causes (8%), and indirect causes such as HIV and malaria, which may be aggravated by pregnancy. The technologies needed to prevent deaths from most of these causes exist. For this reason, the WHO designates such deaths as "avoidable.". Increased

coverage of skilled birth attendance and delivery in facilities properly resourced for emergency obstetric care is essential for prevention of these deaths.⁸

Skills Training Centre

There are various organizations working to reduce maternal mortality in developing countries which are involved in a wide range of activities, including training traditional birth attendants, providing skilled care at birth, and distributing clean delivery kits. Other interventions include safe abortion and post-abortion care, family planning, and obstetric care.¹

Since a majority of maternal deaths occur during and soon after delivery, many interventions concentrate on this perinatal period. Traditional birth attendants (TBAs) assist many developing-world mothers during birth. Many programmes have attempted to utilize this existing system by giving short training courses to TBAs to improve their knowledge and skill. There is little evidence that such programmes are effective in reducing maternal mortality, although they may be effective in reducing mortality among newborns. Efforts to increase the number of births attended by skilled attendants are also targeting a reduction in deaths around the time of delivery. Another tactic being used is the distribution of clean delivery kits, which may help to reduce infection during birth.²

Attaining knowledge is an easy task, but putting it into practice can be quite difficult. Healthcare workers cannot remain mererepositories of a body of knowledge but instead need to be able to implement that knowledge in practice. Clinical practice entails both knowledge and skill. Attainment of skill requires interest, motivation and opportunities; the lack of providers with the appropriate skills contributes to an inability to attend to the needs of patients in hospitals.

Good health outcomes depend upon the acquisition and implementation of appropriate skills to be utilized during the delivery of health care services. In order to optimally utilize the knowledge and skills that health care providers learn during their training, it is important to create opportunities to reinforce those skills while in clinical practice. Creating skill labs with linkages for post training mentoring is one intervention that can be used to accomplish this. Each lab contains specific skill stations that are aimed to provide the requisite skills to health professionals. A skills lab has the advantage of allowing a learner the opportunity for repetition and feedback, and facilitates individualized learning. Learning outcomes can be clearly measured by assessment of performance through the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) method⁷. The reinforcement of skill acquisition through repetition and feedback can assist in the development of better performance in hospitals and other healthcare settings.

Comprehensive Skills Laboratories with a variety of skill stations are designed with the aim of acquisition and upgrading of the skills of health care providers to enhance their capacity to provide quality Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (RMNCH) services to improve health outcomes. A Skills Lab is comprised of skill stations where the trainees learn through practicing on mannequins, simulation exercises, demonstration videos and presentations. The basic objective is the reorientation of personnel during in-service training, and continuing education of health care providers for RMNCH services. The skills lab can also be utilized to train and orient students

pursuing Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), General Nurse Midwife (GNM) and Midwifery courses. Certification in each of these areas can be based on the demonstration of competencies acquired during the skills training.³

In order to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, the Government of India, in partnership with Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) is setting up the National Skills Training Centre. This project is targeting the improvement of the quality of Essential Obstetric & Newborn Care and reduction of maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality by increasing availability and improving the quality of Skilled Birth Attendance (SBA) and Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC). Dr. Himanshu Bhushan, Deputy Commissioner, Ministry of Health, had the idea to set up the skill labs, so as to ensure quality services in public health facilities.

Delegates from India visited LSTM's Centre for Maternal and Newborn Health, (CMNH), in May of 2014 to meet with facilitators and CMNH staff and take part in an orientation workshop about the implementation of skills laboratories in India. The workshop, which was held at LSTM, was an opportunity to review the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn & Child Health and Adolescent (RMNCH+A) curriculum developed by the Government of India (GoI). The RMNCH+A strategy of the Government of India (GoI) is based on a continuum of care approach, encompassing the health and wellbeing of women, newborn and children, to be managed through the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). To strengthen the services to ensure the continuum of care approach, it is essential that the service providers are competent.³

The National Skills Training Centre has 5 nodal centers in New Delhi, namely Jamia Hamdard, Safdurjung Hospital, Lady Harding Hospital, TNAI and NIHFV. Jamia Hamdard was the first national nodal center to have started the training. The skill lab at Jamia Hamdard was the result of the tireless efforts of Dr.G.N Qazi (Vice Chancellor, Jamia Hamdard) and Dr. Manju Chugani (Principal, Ruffaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard). The enthusiasm put forth for setting up the skill lab was an inspiration for the whole team. This training had trainers from both LSTM and GoI. Those who attended will further train the faculty of their respective institutes and other ANMs. The National Skills Training Centre – Daksh, located in the campus of Jamia Hamdard, includes 4 Cabins, 1 Examination room, 1 Labor room and a Seminar room. The Skills Lab helps to facilitate learning by providing the setting with, mannequins, equipment, and supplies necessary for the acquisition of hands-on clinical skills.

The SkillsLab had an initial 6 day training program, which included all the basic skills. The sessions in the skills stations are conducted following a predetermined schedule. The trainees were grouped into 4 teams to conduct each session. The skills included in the training are Antenatal Care, Lab Tests, Universal Precautions, Abdominal Palpation, Partograph, Processing of Equipment, Normal Delivery, Organizing Labor Room, Management of Postpartum Hemorrhage, Eclampsia, Management of Shock, Insertion of Interval Intrauterine Contraceptive Device, , Newborn care Corner, Breast feeding and Kangaroo Mother Care, Documentation, Essential Newborn care, Muli Dose Inhaler (MDI) with spacer, Nebulization, and a Neonatal Resuscitation Program. A pretest was administered on the first day, and a post-test was administered on the last day.

The overall aim was to ensure that the recommended practices are evidence based, woman friendly and in line with the essential interventions that need to be in place to reduce reproductive, maternal, newborn and child mortality and morbidity and promote reproductive health. These Skill Labs will provide a platform for augmentation of the skills of health personnel involved in the delivery of RMNCH + A services across public health institutions in India.

These skill labs covered the training requirements of Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, Staff Nurses, Medical Officers and Obstetricians, initially the as in-service education, and then covering pre-service education as well. Simulation or skills based training accommodates the different learning styles of participants; helps diminish the gap between theory and practice and may allow for a better integration of theoretical concepts.⁴

Conclusion

Skills Labs serve as a prototype demonstration and learning facility for health care providers so that they develop desired competencies. The Skills Labs are equipped with various stations as per the skill requirements for various cadres of health care providers. This can also aid in institutionalizing the usage of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and adherence to technical protocols, so that they become a part of routine practice. Such labs may also be superior to other didactic methods by providing the opportunity for repetitive skill practice, simulating clinical scenarios under the supervision of a qualified trainer.³

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