

Delivery Kit

Health need

High rates of maternal and perinatal mortality in developing countries indicate a crucial need for new and innovative interventions for pregnancy and neonatal care. In developing countries most women have no access to maternity services due to distance, cost, and local customs; many give birth alone. High rates of neonatal and maternal tetanus and sepsis indicate a need for education and materials focused on clean birth practices.

Technology solution

The basic delivery kit is an inexpensive, simple kit designed to help create a clean birthing environment, particularly for home births. The contents of the delivery kit include a clean razor blade, cord ties, a small bar of soap, a plastic delivery sheet, and pictorial instructions. The delivery kit is designed for use by skilled birth attendants, family members, and women who give birth unassisted in the home. Community health workers and traditional birth attendants are oriented to the kits so they can either provide it as part of their birth delivery services or encourage families to purchase the kit for home deliveries. The kits are also designed to be sold through retail distribution outlets. In 1994, PATH assisted a women's health small business in Nepal to design, develop, and market a locally appropriate kit. With the approval of the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Nepal, that kit is now being sold and used throughout the country. More than one million kits have been sold since 1994. Qualitative and quantitative evaluations have demonstrated its acceptability and effectiveness.

Current status and results

To further demonstrate the health effects of kit use, PATH conducted the first cross-sectional study of single-use delivery kits in Africa. This major quantitative evaluation of the kit's impact on preventing cord infection and puerperal sepsis in Tanzania was carried out in collaboration with the National Institute for Medical Research and the MOH. A total of 3,262 women were enrolled in the study, which was completed in late 2004. Results show that the kit has significant impact in reducing rates of infection. Newborns of mothers who used the clean delivery kit were about 13 times less likely to develop cord infection than infants whose mothers did not use the kit. Women who used the kit were about 3 times less likely to develop puerperal sepsis than women who did not use the kit. The study results suggest that making clean delivery kits available through government health clinics, markets, private pharmacies, or other commercial channels could likely help reduce rates of infection. PATH continues to seek opportunities to promote the use of clean delivery kits and integrate their use into larger maternal and child health programming around the world. A manual describing how to set up a local production project is available from PATH.



PATH/Patrick McKern

Inexpensive, simple, delivery kit for use in home births.

A recent PATH study in Tanzania demonstrates that clean delivery kits are an appropriate and acceptable technology that reduces rates of maternal and neonatal infection.

Availability

For use within Nepal, kits can be ordered from Maternal and Child Health Products Pvt., Ltd., Purano, Baneshwor, P.O.B. 7136, Kathmandu, Nepal, Tel: 977-1-475-418, Fax: 977-1-410-375, Email: mch@ecomail.com.np.

To purchase delivery kits from UNFPA, contact Procurement Services, Midtermolen 3, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark, email Daniela Andries at Andries@unfpa.org.

For more information regarding this project, contact Adriane Berman at aberman@path.org.

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