Maternal And Child Health

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The paper discusses indicators related to maternal and child health. In this paper, we have compared maternal and child health in different provinces by comparing these indicators (World Health Organization, 2024).

Antenatal Care

Appropriate care before, during, and after the delivery is considered an important aspect of the health of both mother and baby. About three-fourths, i.e., 73 percent of mothers, reported that they consulted a skilled health provider at least once for the most recent birth. A skilled care provider can be a lady health visitor, nurse, or doctor. Across regions, the percentage of mothers receiving antenatal care from a skilled provider varies. The proportion is lowest in Baluchistan (31%) as compared to Sindh, Punjab (78% each), and KPK (61%).

Percentage of mothers who receive antenatal care from a skilled provider

Antenatal care is believed to be an important part of a mother's health because it can lead to improved mother nutrition and decrease low birth weight. Besides this, women in Pakistan receive antenatal care coverage at least four times 36.6%. Women in Sindh province (44.4%) are more than three times as likely as women in Baluchistan province (12.2%) to receive coverage of antenatal care at least four times during the pregnancy. In Punjab, 38.6 percent of women receive coverage of antenatal care at least four times. In KPK, the proportion is 24%, but the proportion is quite lower than the national estimation of women receiving coverage of antenatal care at least four times.

Delivery Care

Proper medical care and hygienic conditions at the time of delivery can decrease the risk of infections and complications that may lead to serious illness or death of the mother or the newborn baby. More than half of births (52%) that occur in Pakistan are assisted by a skilled provider. The proportion of births assisted by healthcare providers is highest in Sindh, Punjab, and KPK, i.e., 61%, 53%, and 48%, respectively.

Similarly, facility-based births are also the least common in Baluchistan (16%) among all provinces of Pakistan. Facilities-based births are more common in Sindh (59%), Punjab (48%), and KPK (41%). It

means that Baluchistan does not have adequate resources for skilled birth delivery.

Postnatal Care

Postnatal check-ups and care play a significant role in preventing complications among mothers after birth, such as postpartum depression, anemia, and other issues. In Pakistan, 60.3 per 100 women receive postnatal care within two days of delivery. However, there is a significant difference between provinces. It is the lowest among women in Baluchistan (37.2) and KPK (37.7). On the other hand, Sindh and Punjab have the highest proportion of women receiving postnatal care, i.e., 66.3% and 66%, respectively.

Other Indicators

Most of the women in Pakistan are unaware of the modern methods of family planning and their significance on their health. That's why the demand for modern family planning methods among women in Pakistan is just 47%. Women of Punjab and Sindh have the highest demands for family planning methods at 49.7% and 48.6%, respectively. On the other hand, women in Baluchistan and KPK have the lowest demand for modern methods of family planning.

The PDHS 2012-2013 also took measurements of the height and weight of women aged 15 to 49 years. It showed that 40% of women in Pakistan were obese. KPK and Punjab have a proportion of 50% and 43% of obese women, respectively, which is higher than the national estimation. On the other hand, Baluchistan (35%) and Sindh (29%) have a percentage of obese women that is less than the national estimation.

Child Health

Information on child and infant mortality is considered important in recognizing segments of the country that are at high risk.

Child mortality rates are basic indicators of assessing the quality of life as well as the health of children less than five years old(United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, 2024). In Pakistan, the rate of infants is 74 per 1000 live births. The rate of Infant mortality differs by region. The rate of infant mortality in Baluchistan is 97 per 1000 live births in contrast to KPK, which has the lowest among all provinces (58/per 1000 live births). Sindh and Punjab have infant mortality rates of 74 and 88/1000 live births, respectively.

A comparison of the mortality rates of under-five children reported in PDHS 2012-2013 shows a similar trend among different provinces. Baluchistan has the highest mortality rate (111/1000 live births) of under five years children, followed by Punjab (105/1000 live births) and Sindh (97/1000 live

births). The rate is lowest in KPK, almost half of Sindh, Punjab, and Baluchistan (50/1000 live births).

Healthcare Services for Children

Immunization against communicable diseases is an important strategy to promote the health of children by building strong immunity against infections such as polio, pneumonia, and other infectious diseases. PDHS 2012-2013 shows that overall, just over half of children aged 12 to 23 months are fully vaccinated. By looking at vaccination coverage for specific provinces, we come to know that there are significant differences between different provinces. The proportion of fully vaccinated children is highest in Punjab (65.6%) and lowest in Baluchistan (16.4%). It is considerably lower for children in Sindh (29.7%) as well when compared with national estimation.

It is also noted that one in every five children (21%) in Baluchistan does not receive any vaccination at all. In Punjab, only 1.5% of children haven't received any vaccination, which is more than five times better than in Sindh (8.5%). The proportion of non-vaccinated children in KPK is 12%, which is still higher than the national estimation (5.4%).

Diarrhea and respiratory diseases are among the major causes of death of children in Pakistan. Early diagnosis and treatment are considered important in reducing these diseases and thus important in decreasing the deaths of children. PDHS data from 2013 shows that In Pakistan, half of children with certain illnesses were taken to healthcare services or professionals. Children in Baluchistan are less likely to receive medical treatment for a disease than children in other provinces. There is no big difference in proportion between Sindh (56.2), Punjab (52.3%), and KPK (55.9%).

Percentage of children who receive medical treatment for the disease.

According to the PDHS 2012-2013, 30% of children less than five years old in Pakistan are underweight. One out of three children in Baluchistan is underweight (35%). The proportion of underweight children in Sindh, Punjab, and KPK is almost the same, i.e., 29%, 26%, and 26%, respectively. Although the proportion in these provinces is lower than the national estimation, it is quite higher when compared with MDG goals (millennium developmental goals).

References

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