



SEHAT CHECK



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2023

A monthly roundup of
news articles on
women's health in
Pakistan

A Joint Project of



EDITOR'S NOTE

HELLO THERE!

Another month has passed without major news coverage about women from flood-hit communities and hence nothing was reported on their health challenges either. According to Al-Jazeera, the number of pregnant women in flood-stricken areas was estimated to be 400,000 back in November 2022. Yet, there has been no recent news coverage about them. If women and our future generations are to fully recover from the floods, they need free or heavily subsidised quality healthcare.

One of the main impediments in women's healthcare remains the stigma surrounding it, especially reproductive health. Such taboos ensure that information about women's reproductive or menstrual health is not included in the curriculum and much of what women and girls learn is inaccurate information passed on like Chinese whispers. De-stigmatisation of conversations about women's healthcare can lead to timely medical interventions and are key to tackling women's medical problems. Read more about this stigma in the excerpt 'LLF audience enlightened about The Grammar of Gender' in this issue of SH.



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH CARE FOR MARRIED WOMEN CAN SAVE PRECIOUS LIVES

New estimates produced jointly by the Guttmacher Institute and the Population Council reveal critical gaps in reproductive health services for young married women of reproductive age (15–19) in Pakistan. The factsheet 'Investing in the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Adolescents in Pakistan,' is based on Guttmacher report 'Adding it Up' and examines the current needs for contraceptive services for young mothers in Pakistan. The factsheet quantifies the health benefits of investing in contraceptive, maternal health care for young married women of ages 15-19 years and provides estimates of the cost of fully meeting these needs. Findings show that simultaneously expanding both modern contraceptive services and maternal care would not only maximize benefits to women but would also be an efficient use of funds. Currently, of the 461,000 young mothers (15-19) who want to avoid a pregnancy in Pakistan, 364,000 or about three-fourths have an unmet need for modern contraceptives. MNA Rumina Khurshid Alam, special assistant to Prime Minister and Convener National Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs attended the dissemination ceremony of the Population Council and Guttmacher's factsheet and reiterated government's commitment to population welfare. She stressed the need for increasing health awareness amongst young people at all levels and greater investment on expanding reproductive health services for adolescents through community midwives and Lady Health Workers programme.

Source:
The News

Date:
7-2-2023

WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO TWINS INSIDE RESCUE 1122 AMBULANCE

A woman gives birth to twins inside the ambulance of Rescue 1122 here on Monday. Spokesman of Rescue 1122 informed that an expecting woman from Ashab Baba area was being shifted to the hospital by the rescue staff in an ambulance. Owing to the critical state of the women the lady emergency medical technician Mehrun Nisa of Rescue 1122 expertly handled the situation with the consent of the family of the woman. The professional skills of the lady medical technician paid off as the woman gave birth to twins inside the Rescue 1122 ambulance.



Source:
The Frontier Post

Date:
7-2-2023

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Source:
Express
Tribune

Date:
13-2-2023



PAKISTAN'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM: RISING FROM THE ASHES

Everyone has a lot of complaints about the current healthcare system of Pakistan. Even rich people who can afford private care are not getting quality treatment. The public sector situation is even worse with multiple patients lying on the same bed and hospitals routinely running out of key medicines or critical medical equipment. Still, we may not be aware of the extent of the rot in the system. Every year we add 500,000 new tuberculosis cases, making Pakistan the 5th highest burden country. Around 12 million people are living with hepatitis B and C, making us the worst affected country in the Eastern Mediterranean region. More than 250,000 children die in their first 28 days of life, making Pakistan the riskiest country for young children. More children die in Pakistan than in Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Mali and Chad. Nearly two hundred mothers die out of every thousand giving birth – one of the highest maternal mortality rates in our region. In 2022, Pakistan reported more than 3.4 million malaria cases. Pakistan had the biggest outbreak of Extremely Drug Resistant (XDR) typhoid, affecting an estimated 40,000 in two cities alone. We had the largest outbreak of HIV in young children, which was not linked to mother to child transmission.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Source:

Daily Mashriq

Date:

15-2-2023



NO SINGLE BED FOR INFANT GIRL AMONG 5,000 BEDS' HOSPITALS OF PESHAWAR (TRANSLATED)

An infant girl of 20 days could not get a bed in major government hospitals of Peshawar. According to details, the girl was referred from a private hospital to LRH (Lady Reading Hospital) due to lack of health facilities in the hospital but she didn't find any bed in a hospital of around 2000 beds. A trainee medical officer referred her to KTH, from where she was referred to MCH. The girl couldn't find any single bed in any of the 3 biggest hospitals of the province, later she was shifted to a private hospital.

LGH TO COLLECT DATA OF DIABETIC PREGNANT WOMEN

The Lahore General Hospital (LGH) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan Society of Gynaecologists to compile data of pregnant women suffering from diabetes. As per the MoU, computerised record will be maintained, under the title "Maternal Diabetic Registry for Pregnant Women Suffering from Diabetes", of such women visiting the LGH for treatment. LGH Chief Executive Prof Dr Muhammad Al-Fareed Zafar and Pakistan Society of Gynaecologists head Dr Saima Zubair signed the MoU. Prof Zafar says this initiative will help in collecting data of pregnant women suffering from diabetes and preparing a standardised record. This data, he says, will not only help in the treatment of such patients, but also assist young researchers to find out the reasons for developing diabetes during pregnancy. He adds during pregnancy, most women become diabetic which sometimes creates medical issues for the newborns as well. He said the children born to diabetic women have many complications by birth which become a permanent liability for the parents and society. Prof Zafar says many women have an increase in sugar level only during pregnancy and they become temporarily diabetic, which increases the chances of normalisation after the childbirth.

Source:

Dawn

Date:

21-2-2023

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

FORMULA MILK PRESCRIPTION TO BABIES WITHOUT REASON IS A CRIME IN PAKISTAN (TRANSLATED)

Source:

Daily
Khabrain

Date:

23-2-2023

In Pakistan, prescription of formula milk without genuine reason is a crime, The Protection of Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition was passed in 2002 to stop the advertising of formula milks. According to health experts, formula milk is causing mental health issues among Pakistani children. Breastfeeding not only impacts for better health of baby but also reduces risks of breast cancer among lactating mothers. The ratio of breastfeeding is lower in Pakistan. According to the report of UN and UNICEF published years ago, no country meets the standards of lactation set by health experts and the ratio of breastfeeding in only 23 countries out of 194 is higher. In Pakistan, the ratio is only 18pc and only 37.7pc mothers breastfeed their children upto 6 months, the report added.

LLF AUDIENCE ENLIGHTENED ABOUT THE GRAMMAR OF GENDER

Dr Tahira Kazmi, a gynae feminist writer, has advocated talking about sexual and reproductive health of women openly to address their medical problems effectively. Speaking at a book launch session of Dr Tahira Kazmi's fourth book titled "The Grammar of Gender: Women's Reproductive Health and Feminist Literature" moderated by Tasneem Ahmar during ongoing 10th Lahore Literary Festival (LLF) at Alhamra here on Saturday, Dr Tahira Kazmi said that Pakistan's maternal mortality rate (MMR) has been alarming, as only Afghanistan was behind Pakistan with a higher rate of MMR in the region. "The women feel ashamed to talk about periods due to societal pressures, whereas life starts with periods. We use an Urdu word "sharamgah" for vagina, which means a place of shame. We tend to call our place of birth a place of shame, which is not right," she explained.

Source:
The News

Date:
26-2-2023

DISEASES & INJURIES



Source:
The News

Date:
1-2-2023

EFFECTIVE AWARENESS SESSIONS ON CERVICAL CANCER URGED

Parliamentary Secretary for National Health Services, Dr. Shazia Aslam Soomro on Tuesday said that health institutions and hospitals should start effective awareness campaigns on cervical cancer to educate people about the disease and its treatment aspects. Addressing the closing ceremony of Maroof International Hospital's (MIH) cervical awareness campaign, she said that the government will continue playing its role in educating people about the disease and ensuring treatment services at public hospitals. She said that the role of private sector is crucial and urged them to initiate such drives in collaboration with the government to set targets. She applauded the awareness campaigns launched by Maroof Int'l Hospital throughout the month of January and appreciated that the spotlight has been put on a lesser known and rarely talked about disease.

47500 WOMEN LOSE LIVES AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER (TRANSLATED)

"47500 women have lost their lives against cervical cancer while 89800 were diagnosed with the disease across the world since 2020" said Parliamentary Secretary National Health Dr Shazia Sobia while addressing an awareness session on cervical cancer, an issue that is barely discussed in society. The awareness session was organized by a private hospital in collaboration with the Health Ministry, UNICEF and WHO. The session was also attended by DG Population, health specialist at UNICEF's country office Islamabad Dr. Maryam. The session stressed on the need for public-private partnership to address the issue.



Source:
Daily Ausaf

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2-2-2023

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Gender Watch

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