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PROSAMI, USA

Telemedicine and experienced midwives in the Congo: Making a huge difference in the lives of many

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the home to more than 80 million people. The DRC rural areas have one of the highest infant mortality rates (IMR) and maternal mortality rates (MMR) in the world. The DRC IMR for rural areas is 75 to 100 per 1,000 live births. The DRC MMR for the same areas is an astonishing 680 – 700 death per 100,000 live births. The PROSAMI program advocates the training of committed Congolese midwives, using the International Council of Midwives (ICM) standards, to the level of advanced midwife (ADM). Each ADM would then proceed to oversee a rural maternal and infant's clinic in the designated Tshitenge district of DRC, where the IMR has escalated to 125/1,000 live births. PROSAMI brought the first four Congolese candidate midwives to the USA in January, 2015, for 8 months of didactic training, thus laying a solid foundation for the unique training model designed to meet maternal and infant's healthcare needs in the rural areas in low resource countries. The four candidate midwives returned to their homeland in the DRC in October, 2015, to complete their training, and at the same time they have been assigned the oversight and facilitation of the training for 16 other local midwives, which espouses a cascade training model. PROSAMI has secured a two room pilot center that serves as a classroom, and in the future months this well positioned outpost will be used for the PROSAMI maternal and infant clinic in Mbuji-Mayi, a major city in the Kasai oriental province of the DRC. PROSAMI has also shipped from USA to DRC cargoes including 3,400 surgical instruments for the benefit of the rural maternal and infant's clinics as well as 22 computers and 16 two-volume textbooks to facilitate the training program. UVA sponsored telemedicine setups within the Mbuji-Mayi pilot center permit the transmission of lecture material from the United States, South Africa, and other parts of the globe directly into the classroom for these highly motivated ADM students. As the PROSAMI 20 trained advanced midwives go forth in the DRC, they will begin supervising maternal and infants' clinics in the resource scarce Tshitenge district. Many mothers will have a chance to live through childbirth, and babies will not be born to die. Then PROSAMI's motto, "No more death for those giving life and no more babies will be born to die," will ring loudly across the globe.

1. MMR definition: Maternal mortality is defined as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. – World Health Organization definition
2. The IMR refers to the number of infant deaths, within the first year of life, occurring among the live births in a given geographical area during a given year. The denominator is listed as per 1,000 live births occurring among the population of the given geographical area, during the same year. - World Health Organization definition.

Biography

David V Strider is a Nurse Practitioner with 33 years of experience as a Registered Nurse (30 years in cardiovascular surgery and 11 years with pediatric /neonatal ICU nursing), 19 years as a Nurse Practitioner, and attainment of doctor in nursing (DNP) degree in 2012. He attended College of William and Mary for Undergraduate studies and University of Virginia for graduate degrees. He also teaches in the UVA School of Nursing. He is a Charter Member and President of PROSAMI.

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