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The flipside of the coin: Reminiscing on the current global picture of neonatal tetanus (NNT)

Raphael S Oruamabo

Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria

Statement of the Problem: Doctors and nurses who graduate from universities in Europe and North America and subsequently take up employment in these regions will probably not see one case of NNT during their entire working career. However, the fact remains that this condition still exists in some developing countries. As of March, 2017, 18 countries were yet to eliminate the disease and most of these countries are in parts of Africa, India and the South Pacific. NNT is easily preventable by immunizing females before or during pregnancy or by ensuring clean delivery, clean severance of the umbilical cord and proper care of the cord in the days following birth.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: An extensive review of the literature on NNT over a defined time-frame was carried out being guided at all times by the WHO case definition of NNT. Aspects of social epidemiology, clinical picture and management principles are briefly described in this presentation.

Conclusion & Significance: While it is not intended to be a didactic lecture on NNT, the principal objective here is to remind the audience of the distribution pattern of those disease entities that should appropriately be described as social scourges; scrutinizing them against the backdrop of current trends in globalization and the tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDPs), particularly numbers 1 to 6 and 17.

raphael_oruamabo@hotmail.com