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Maternal and infant healthcare problems in the Gambia

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In the Gambia, the maternal mortality ratio is unacceptably high at 433 deaths per 100,000 live births. Most of these deaths are because of avoidable direct obstetrics complications such as hemorrhage, hypertension, sepsis, anemia etc. Globally 2.5 million children died in the first month of life in 2017 alone- Approximately 7000 neonatal deaths everyday-most of which occurred in the first week, with about one million dying on the first day and close to one million dying within the next six days. The past two decades have been marked by substantive progress in reducing maternal and child deaths. Yet progress has often been slow to reach those who need it most. Provision of quality care is uneven, often failing to

respect the rights and dignity of those who seek it. This hampers health outcomes for women, children and communities, and impedes our progress in ending preventable deaths by 2030, as enshrined in the sustainable development goals. The first 28 days of life –the neonatal period- is the most vulnerable time for a child’s survival. Children face the highest risk of dying in their first month of life at an average global rate of 18 deaths per 1000 live births in 2017. Comparatively, the probability of dying after the first month but before reaching age one was 12 and after age one but before age five was 10.

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