

# The neonatal period is the most vulnerable time for a child

- Globally, 2.5 million children died in the first month of life in 2017.
- 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 1,000 live births in 2017.
- Up to one half of all deaths occur within the first 24 hours of life and 75% occur in the first week.
- The 48 hours immediately following birth is the most crucial period for newborn survival. This is when the mother and child should receive follow-up care to prevent and treat illness.

# Global progress

- Globally, the number of neonatal deaths declined from 5.1 million in 1990 to 2.7 million in 2015.
- The decline in neonatal mortality from 1990 to 2015 has been slower than that of post-neonatal under-5 mortality: 47% compared with 58% globally. This pattern applies to most low- and middle-income countries.
- If current trends continue, around half of the 69 million child deaths between 2016 and 2030 will occur during the neonatal period.
- The share of neonatal deaths is projected to increase from 45% of under-5 deaths in 2015 to 52% in 2030.
- The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of neonatal mortality rate is 12 deaths per 1000 live births by 2030.

# Huge disparities in the level of neonatal mortality persist across countries and regions

- Despite a declining neonatal mortality rate globally, marked disparities in neonatal mortality exist across regions and countries.
- Regionally, neonatal mortality was highest in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with each estimated at 27 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017.
- A child born in sub-Saharan Africa or in South Asia is nine times more likely to die in the first month than a child born in a high-income country.
- Across countries, the risk of dying in the first month of life was about 50 times higher in the highest mortality country than in the lowest mortality country.

# Huge disparities in the level of neonatal mortality persist across countries and regions

- Lower under-five mortality is associated with a higher concentration of under-five deaths occurring during the neonatal period.
- While neonatal deaths accounted for 47 per cent of global under-five deaths in 2017, the share of neonatal deaths among under-five deaths is still relatively low in sub-Saharan Africa (37 per cent), which remains the region with the highest under-five mortality rates.
- In regions where under-five mortality rates are relatively low, more than half of all under-five deaths occur during the neonatal period.
- The only exception is South Asia, where the proportion of neonatal deaths is among the highest (60 per cent) despite a relatively high under-five mortality rate.

# Reducing Newborns Mortality

- Vast majority of newborn deaths take place in developing countries where access to health care is low.
- Most of these newborns die at home, without skilled care that could greatly increase their chances for survival.
- Up to two thirds of newborn deaths can be prevented if known, effective health measures are provided at birth and during the first week of life

# Reducing Newborns Mortality

- Prior to birth, a mother can increase her child's chance of survival and good health by attending antenatal care consultations, being immunized against tetanus, and avoiding smoking and use of alcohol.
- At the time of birth, a baby's chance of survival increases significantly with delivery in a health facility in the presence of a skilled birth attendant.

# Reducing Newborns Mortality

- Skilled health care during pregnancy, childbirth and in the postnatal (immediately following birth) period prevents complications for mother and newborn, and allows for early detection and management of problems.
- WHO and UNICEF now recommend home visits by a skilled health worker during a baby's first week of life to improve newborn survival.
- Newborns in special circumstances, such as low-birth-weight babies, babies born to HIV-positive mothers, or sick babies, require additional care and should be referred to a hospital.

# Reducing Newborns Mortality

**After birth, essential care of a newborn should include:**

- ensuring that the baby is breathing;
- starting the newborn on exclusive breastfeeding right away;
- keeping the baby warm; and
- washing hands before touching the baby.
- Identifying and caring for illnesses in a newborn is very important, as a baby can become very ill and die quickly if an illness is not recognized and treated appropriately. Sick babies must be taken immediately to a trained health care provider.

# Children mortality

- 5.9 million children under the age of 5 years died in 2015.
- Children in sub-Saharan Africa are more than 14 times more likely to die before the age of 5 than children in developed regions.
- Malnourished children, particularly those with severe acute malnutrition, have a higher risk of death from common childhood illness such as diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria
- More than half of under-5 child deaths are due to diseases that are preventable and treatable through simple, affordable interventions. Strengthening health systems to provide such interventions to all children will save many young lives.
- The global burden of child deaths is a call for urgent and concerted action to further improve the survival chances of the world's children.

# Causes of death

- The main causes of newborn deaths are prematurity and low-birth-weight, infections, asphyxia (lack of oxygen at birth) and birth trauma or preterm birth complications. These causes account for nearly 80% of deaths in this age group.
- From the end of the neonatal period and through the first 5 years of life, the main causes of death are pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria.
- Malnutrition is the underlying contributing factor in about 45% of all child deaths, making children more vulnerable to severe diseases.
- Wide gaps in child mortality across sub-groups or areas within countries have been documented, warranting a call for an equity-focused approach to reducing child mortality.
- Children are at greater risk of dying before age 5 if they are born in rural areas, poor households, or to a mother denied basic education.

# Global progress

- The world made remarkable progress in child survival in the past few decades, and millions of children have better survival chances than in 1990—1 in 26 children died before reaching age 5 in 2017, compared to 1 in 11 in 1990.
- Promisingly, sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the highest under-5 mortality rate in the world, has also registered a substantive acceleration. Its annual rate of reduction increased from 1.6 percent in 1990s to 4.1 percent in 2000–2015.
- The remarkable decline in under-5 mortality since 2000 has saved the lives of 48 million children under age 5.
- Mortality rates among older children and young adolescents (aged 5-14) also dropped by more than 50 per cent since 1990. Still, almost one million children died in this age group in 2017 alone.
- Despite the global progress in reducing child mortality over the past few decades, an estimated 5.4 million children under age 5 died in 2017—roughly half of those deaths occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

# Global progress

- Between 1990 and 2015, 62 of the 195 countries with available estimates met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 target of a two-thirds reduction in the under-5 mortality rate. Among them, 24 are low- and lower-middle income countries.
- Despite these gains, progress was insufficient to reach MDG 4 globally and in many regions.
- Currently, 79 countries have an under 5 mortality rate above 25, and 47 of them will not meet the proposed SDG target of 25 deaths per 1000 live births by 2030 if they continue their current trends in reducing under-5 mortality.
- Among these 47 countries, 34 are in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The acceleration needed to reach the goals in those 47 countries is substantial – 30 countries must at least double their current rate of reduction, and 11 of those 30 countries must at least triple their current rate of reduction.

# Global progress

- Globally, substantial progress has been made towards achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4. Since 1990 the global under-5 mortality rate has dropped from 91 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990 to 43 in 2015.
- But the rate of this reduction in under-5 mortality was insufficient to reach the MDG target of a two-thirds reduction of 1990 mortality levels by the year 2015.