

How to prevent avoidable deaths by reducing stillbirths?

KEY ELEMENTS

- The world has suffered the loss of 48 million fetal deaths (also called) stillbirths in the past 2 decades – 1 fetal death occurs every 16 seconds which means that over 2 million babies are stillborn every year
- If each country's stillbirth rate reached or fell below the current average rate in high-income countries (3 stillbirths per 1,000 total births) by 2030, an additional 6.6 million lives could be saved
- In 2019, stillbirths are concentrated in a few countries, with the greatest number found in India, followed by Pakistan, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, China and Ethiopia. These 6 countries accounted for half of the estimated global number of stillbirths and 44% of global live births
- The estimated direct financial cost of a stillbirth is 10–70% greater than the cost of a live birth
- In Sweden, fetal mortalities have stagnated at around 2.4 infant deaths per 1000 live births while the rest of the Nordics display a similar trend with the exception of Denmark where the deaths have risen.

GOALS

To reduce the number of stillbirths in each country around the world to achieve a rate of 12 stillbirths or fewer per 1,000 total births by 2030 and to close equity gaps, as defined by the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP).

CHALLENGE

One stillbirth occurs every 16 seconds, which means that about 2 million babies are stillborn every year – a loss that reaches far beyond the loss of life. It has a traumatic long-lasting impact on women and their families around the world, who often endure profound psychological suffering as well as stigma from their communities, even in high-income countries. Additional impacts include high financial costs for individuals, healthcare facilities, and workplaces. Perhaps even more tragically, the majority of these deaths could have been avoided – commonly reported causes of stillbirth include delivery complications (over 40% of all stillbirths occurred during labour), infections and maternal conditions such as hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, with fetal growth restriction as a common underlying pathway.

Many of these causes are known and can be avoided through interventions that improve the health of mothers and their babies (e.g. improved nutrition), enable fetal growth monitoring, improve access to quality prenatal and delivery care.

Over the past decade, clinicians, researchers, public health advocates, and parents' groups have raised the profile of fetal mortality as a public health problem. Nearly 30 to 50% of fetal deaths remain underreported and unexplained meaning this data gap is the main blockage for enacting effective prevention strategies.

The following questions are to be considered:

- How can we improve the reporting of the causes of stillbirths?
- How can we improve access and availability of quality prenatal and delivery care?
- How can we reduce the social stigma associated with delivering a stillborn child?
- How can we assist expecting mothers and couples in having more control over their future babies?

END USER

For pregnant women, expecting couples, care providers, hospitals, healthcare centers.

SPECIFIC SDGs CONNECTION



ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

SenseTive is an IoT (Internet of Things) -enabled smart pregnancy monitoring kit that is intended to reduce the uncertainties and better monitor the pregnancy experience. The expectant mother and her partner can be subject to unnecessary stress during the pregnancy period with common causes of worry including the lack of fetal movement or unexpected contractions. The objective of the device is to provide expectant mothers, their spouses and the family physician with the right, real-time data required to make an informed decision concerning the health of the mother and child.