

GAIN Initiative: Implementation of the WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist in Malawi

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Purpose

In 2017, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), School of Nursing and Partners in Health/Abwenzi Pa Za Umoyo (PIH/APZU) formed a partnership to decrease maternal/neonatal morbidity and mortality in Neno district, Malawi.

The Global Action to Improve Nursing & Midwifery Care (GAIN) Initiative equips nurse midwives with the clinical and leadership skills to provide women and their babies safe and respectful childbirth. The intervention is composed of two principal activities:

- 1) Intensive Safe Childbirth & Leadership training
- 2) One year of bedside mentoring by expert nurse midwives

The intervention prepares nurse trainees to increase the use of 28 essential practices promoted by the WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist (SCC).



Skills Practice

Enipher Nakhwala, GAIN trainee, speaks to a mother in Neno District Hospital NICU, during the skills practice session on neonatal assessment.

Methods

Intervention: Safe Childbirth & Leadership Training

- 6 – 10 day course, every 6 months
- 15-20 nurse midwife trainees per cohort
- Facilitators from UCSF, PIH, and Ministry of Health
- Pre-post knowledge testing

Intervention: Mentorship

- One year of site-based mentorship
- Trainees at 2 referral hospitals & 6 health centers
- 1 US nurse mentors, 1 Malawian nurse mentor, 1 Malawian mentor-in-training

WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist (SCC)

- 28 evidence-based practices to prevent or treat complications in low resource delivery settings.
- Lecture, role play, and simulation during training.
- Bedside teaching and in labor wards during site-based mentorship by expert midwives.
- Large SCC posters created as visual tools posted throughout maternity wards at all facilities.
- Observation of deliveries for evaluation of SCC practice performance.
- Ongoing planning with district-level Ministry of Health and Maternity Interest Group to embed SCC in Ministry protocols.



2018 Cohort

GAIN Trainees include 30 nurse midwives working at 8 hospitals and health centers in Neno District. The second cohort received their certificates of course completion in March 2018.

Curriculum Components

Leadership Module: Tools to improve communication, teaching, mentoring, and management skills.

Midwifery Module: Skill building in evidence-based practices in maternal health including: emergency maternal care during labor and delivery, preventing pre-, intra- and post-partum complications, and Kangaroo Mother Care. Emphasis on SCC practices.

Quality Improvement Module: Methodologies for nurses/midwives to identify root causes of adverse events, and to lead team efforts to improve the quality of maternity healthcare delivery in the hospital and outpatient setting.

Neonatal Care Module: Skill building in care of the newborn, including physical exam, resuscitation, low birth weight infant issues, and recognizing sepsis. Emphasis on SCC practices.



Simulation

Luka Mala, GAIN Trainee, and Mary Berger, training facilitator, practice newborn resuscitation during a simulation in a community hospital labor ward.

Evaluation

The evaluation uses mixed methods to determine uptake of the WHO SCC, including staff acceptance, commitment, and implementation. Evaluation methodologies include:

- Pretest and posttest of nurse participants' knowledge related to the SCC.
- Observations of provider performance of SCC practices, recorded on tablet via Commcare software.
- Focus groups to understand participant experiences and perspectives on the implementation of the WHO SCC.
- Facility-level maternity patient data analysis related to maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

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