

**Pacific Heads of Nursing & Midwifery Meeting**

Réunion des directeurs des soins infirmiers et obstétricaux du Pacifique

# Global and Regional Updates on Midwifery Practice

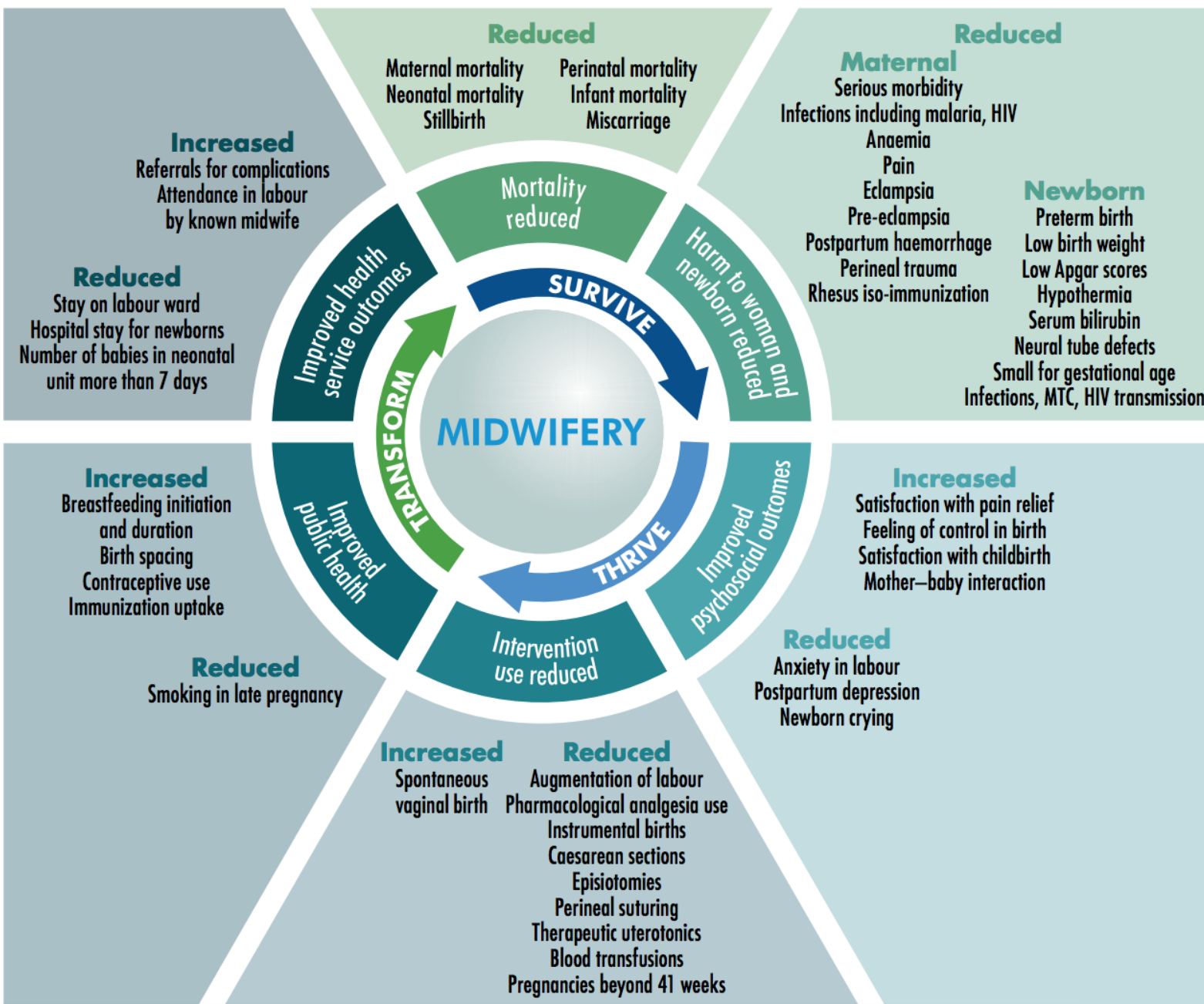
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# Background

- Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Adolescent Health (SRMNAH) is an essential component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The 2021 State of the World's Midwifery Report (SOWMY Report) shows that fully educated, regulated and integrated midwives supported by interdisciplinary teams can provide 90% of all SRMNAH services, yet the State of the Pacific's RMNCAH Workforce 2019 Report from 15 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICT)s reveals that the Pacific has only 1500 Midwives, which constitute barely 10% of the Pacific SRMNAH workforce.
- Evidence shows that a substantial increase in coverage of midwife-delivered interventions (25% increase every five years to 2035) could avert 40% of maternal and newborn deaths and 26% of stillbirths, and universal coverage of midwife-delivered interventions would avert 65% of maternal and neonatal deaths and stillbirths, allowing 4.3 million lives to be saved annually by 2035.

# Over 50 outcomes improved by quality midwifery education and care



- Furthermore, investing in midwives facilitates positive birth experiences, improves health outcomes, augments workforce supply, favors inclusive and equitable growth, facilitates economic stabilization, and can have a positive macroeconomic impact. Achieving these results however, requires increased commitment to, and investment in the midwifery workforce.



**International Confederation of Midwives:** ICM publishes its strategic directions for the triennium 2017–2020, focusing on quality, equity and leadership.

**Global Midwifery Strategy 2018–2030 (UNFPA):** developed to advance the attainment of SDG 3, the strategy aims to help reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

**Strengthening quality midwifery education for universal health coverage 2030: framework for action:** developed by WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and ICM, the report includes a seven-step action plan for use by all stakeholders in maternal and newborn health.



**International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife** (designated by the World Health Assembly).

**State of the World's Nursing 2020: Investing in Education, Jobs and Leadership.**

**2017**      **2018**      **2019**      **2020**

**Essential competencies for midwifery practice 2018 update (ICM):** outlines the minimum set of knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required to use the designation of midwife as defined by ICM.

**Essential competencies for midwifery practice 2019 update (ICM):** includes midwives' role in preventing, detecting and stabilizing complications.

**8th WHO-ICM-ICN Triad Meeting:** participants commit to support countries in developing and implementing 10 priority actions to advance nursing and midwifery agendas in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and towards the realization of UHC.

**Seventy-third World Health Assembly:** designated 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers.

**Impact of midwives paper in The Lancet Global Health:** study led by ICM, UNFPA and WHO provides new estimates on midwives' potential to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and stillbirths.



# Global Progress

Year	Progress Milestones	Supporting Agencies
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global Midwifery Strategy 2018–2030. Developed to advance the attainment of SDG 3, the strategy aims to help reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.</li> <li>Essential competencies for midwifery practice 2018 update: outlines the minimum set of knowledge, skills and professional behaviours required to use the designation of midwife as defined by ICM.</li> </ul>	UNFPA  International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening quality midwifery education for universal health coverage 2030: framework for action: the report includes a seven-step action plan for use by all stakeholders in maternal and newborn health.</li> <li>Essential competencies for midwifery practice 2019 update: includes midwives' role in preventing, detecting and stabilizing complications.</li> </ul>	WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and ICM  ICM
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife</li> <li>8th WHO-ICM-ICN Triad Meeting: participants commit to support countries in developing and implementing 10 priority actions to advance nursing and midwifery agendas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and towards the realization of UHC.</li> <li>Impact of midwives' paper in The Lancet Global Health: provides new estimates on midwives' potential to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and stillbirths.</li> </ul>	Designated by the World Health Assembly  WHO, ICM, ICN  ICM, UNFPA and WHO
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State of the World Midwifery Report</li> </ul>	UNFPA, WHO, ICM
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33<sup>rd</sup> Triennial ICM Congress, Bali: From Evidence to Reality</li> </ul>	ICM

# Regional Progress

- **2016; 2020 Midwifery Societies establishment and inclusion in ICM: Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Fiji Midwifery Societies** fully accepted and integrated into the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) as member associations in 2016 and 2020 respectively
- **2018 -2023 Midwifery Curriculum revision and renewal:** Curricula of 7 Midwifery Schools (Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) reviewed and curricula of 4 schools (Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa and Solomon Islands) updated to International Standards in 2023. Curricula update of remaining 3 schools to be completed in 2024.
- **2018 Establishment of Model Midwife Led Birthing Unit:** Studies show that midwife-led teams can achieve comparable effectiveness and outcomes using less medically intensive care in saving maternal and newborn lives compared with physician-led teams. Makoi's Midwifery led Maternity Unit in Fiji is a great example of this.

- **2019 The State of the Pacific’s RMNCAH Workforce Report** developed.
- **2022 (November) PNG Midwifery Policy:** PNG RMNCAH TAC endorsed the policy with a name change as “Expanded Access to Midwifery in PNG: Support to develop a midwifery policy and midwifery education options paper in Papua New Guinea”. The policy is awaiting final endorsement by PNG Department of Health Management.
- **2021-2023 International Day of the Midwife Celebrations (IDM):** Annual Celebrations of the IDM across the Pacific, with the 2023 theme as “Together Again- From Evidence to Reality”.  
2023: Regional Midwifery Curriculum Implementation workshop
- **2024:** Looking forward- Development of Regional Midwifery Strategy

# Challenges

- **Restrictive and un enabling work and policy environment:** Though there has been much progress in midwifery in the region, there are still many issues that remain of concern, such as inadequate working environment, restrictive scopes of practice, inadequate regulation and licensing systems, and the inequitable distribution of resources, reduce the effect of midwives on health outcomes
- **Inadequate investments in quality midwifery education and training:** Midwives need quality education and training in order to be able to deliver the essential interventions, which includes pre-and in service training; and continuing professional development.
- **Midwifery Workforce shortages:** The State of the Pacific's RMNCAH Workforce 2019 Report shows that most countries have sufficient nurses to meet the need for the elements of SRMNCAH care that nurses are competent to provide, however most have insufficient specialist SRMNCAH cadres, especially midwives. Future midwife workforce availability in most countries is threatened by high levels of staff turnover, out migration and/or an ageing workforce



# Recommendations for Governments

- Develop clear, standardised career pathways for each cadre, with midwives identified separately from nurses in regulation. Ensure remuneration reflects qualifications and responsibilities.
- Develop health workforce planning approaches that reflect the autonomy, role, responsibilities and professional scope of midwives.
- Make continuous professional development a condition of re-licensing in all countries, to encourage in-service training for all, even isolated practitioners.
- Design mentoring programmes so that established or recently retired health workers can share their knowledge and experience with less experienced colleagues.
- Establish Midwifery Led Birthing Units which provides continuity of care through pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period.

# Future Directions

- **Bold Investments are needed to sustain and accelerate the results achieved thus far and for midwives to achieve their potential. This calls for greater investment in 4 key areas:**
  - i) Health workforce planning.
  - ii) High quality education and training of midwives.
  - iii) Midwife led improvements to SRMNAH service delivery including the Midwife led Models of Care.
  - iv) Midwifery leadership and Governance including strengthening the capacity of midwives to drive health policy advancements.

# Recommendations for Development Partners

- Support an enabling environment for midwifery practice through the development of a regional Midwifery Strategy that articulates midwifery professional development and training needs; maps possible career paths for midwives in each country based on country specific HR structure vis a vis international standards of career pathways for midwives; and consists of an implementation plan to strengthen midwifery profession based on development needs and pathways mapping.
- Support the roll-out and implementation of the updated and revised 18 month midwifery curricula by the midwifery faculties across the countries.
- Support the development and consideration of alternative education pathways and options to improve the numbers of graduating midwives in the PICTs.
- Support the establishment of midwifery societies in each country to strengthen midwifery leadership, and enable the voice of midwives to be heard.

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Faakafetai; Malo;  
Tenk u toomas

