

Summary: Results from rapid health facility surveys in Zambia 2014-2016



In order to understand how well the Zambian health system can respond to increased demand for essential Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH) services, MORE MAMaZ undertook two rapid surveys of selected Health Facilities – one in 2014 at the start of the programme and one in 2016 towards the end of the programme.

The main objective of the surveys was to ascertain the level of essential MNH services and the availability of related critical staffing, equipment and medicines being provided by facilities supported by the programme. The surveys were undertaken by MORE MAMaZ field staff in collaboration with District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) and staff of participating Health Facilities.

Key findings:

- Although there have been improvements in some facilities, nurse and midwife staffing levels remain sub-optimal at around 0.6 per 1000 population. The average level for Africa is 1.2 per 1000 population.
- Facility level transport for upward referrals is improving but still lacking in many places.
- The number of Mothers' Shelters is growing but still low.
- Very few Rural Health Centres and Health Posts have the full complement of basic amenities, items of equipment and lab services.
- While Family Planning services are generally on offer, many key components of Antenatal Care, Basic Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care and Child Health services are much less readily available.
- Despite these continuing constraints, institutional deliveries and access to Caesarean Section are generally increasing steadily.
- The findings demonstrate potentially serious implications for quality of care and health outcomes as increased demand from the successful community engagement approach in MORE MAMaZ results in higher use of essential MNH services.

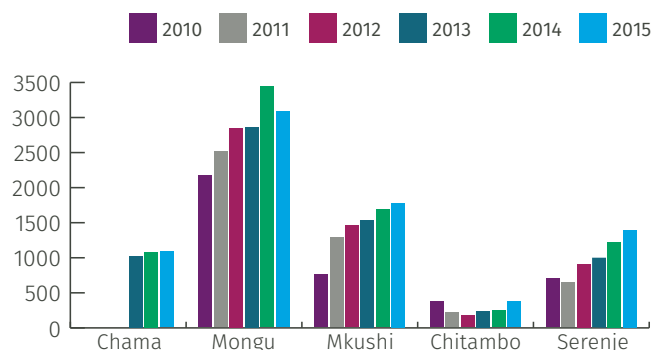


Figure 1: No. Deliveries conducted in the District Hospitals

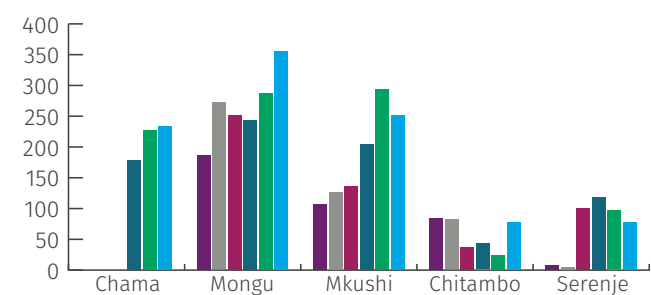


Figure 2: No. Caesarean Sections performed in District Hospitals

Recommendations:

- In collaboration with partners, MOH and DHMTs need to continue to improve staffing levels and the supply of essential commodities and medicines to support the increase in demand for MNH services. Transport challenges also need to be addressed.
- Addressing staff shortages requires sustained efforts through various means, possibly including additional training of new and in-service staff, creation of additional posts, incentives for rural postings, and task-shifting where feasible.
- Obtaining complete and reliable data remains a challenge – DHMTs can build on the foundation laid in MORE MAMaZ to supplement health facility data with community monitoring systems and benefit from the improved collaboration between health facilities and Safe Motherhood Action Groups (SMAGs).

A copy of the survey reports can be obtained from **Miniratu Soyoola** at pdmoremamaz@gmail.com or **Health Partners International** at info@healthpartners-int.co.uk.

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For more information: info@transaid.org, info@healthpartners-int.co.uk, info@developmentdata.info or disacaretrust@gmail.com