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IMPROVING CHILD HEALTH IN MALI

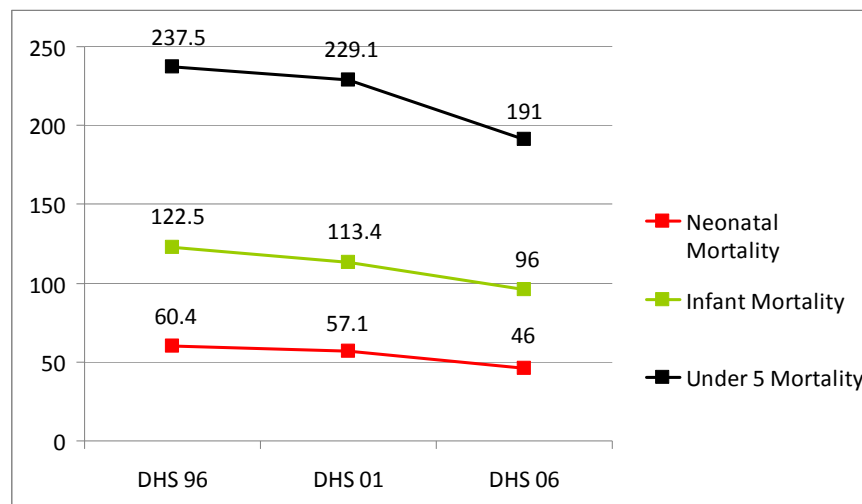
BASICS III

Background

Although child mortality has declined fairly significantly over the past ten years in Mali, positive changes have primarily been concentrated in the post-neonatal and post-infant periods. Improvement has been vastly slower in the neonatal period (i.e., the first four weeks of life), as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Child Mortality in Mali *per thousand live births*



Activities

In view of the above trends, the Ministry of Health (in collaboration with key partners: ATN, Save the Children, and UNICEF) requested technical support from USAID/BASICS to facilitate promotion of neonatal health in Mali through the organization of a national-level workshop for training-of-trainers on newborn health (funded by ATN). Following the national workshop and further discussions with the MOH and technical experts from partner organizations, USAID/BASICS revised and published a training reference manual, based on existing tools for training from the USAID/BASICS newborn health toolkit and experiences from the Mali training itself. The project printed 500 copies for nationwide distribution by the MOH.

Click [here](#) to download the *Manuel de Référence – Soins du Nouveau-né*

Technical support was provided by USAID/BASICS through its Senior Technical Advisor for Newborn Health, its West Africa Regional Advisor, a consultant from Senegal, and experts from Mali. In addition, the USAID/BASICS in-country newborn health coordinators and technical experts from DR Congo and Madagascar also participated in the workshop, fostering south-to-south collaboration, as well as exchange of experiences and lessons learned. The quality and expertise of the group brought to the workshop from DR Congo and Madagascar was such that some were accepted not just as participants but as facilitators; so much so that the members of the MOH, the other facilitators, and participants openly acknowledged how much everyone had benefited from this regional interaction.

During the workshop, programmatic experiences and lessons learned from Saving Newborn Lives in Boughini and from USAID/BASICS-Senegal were shared with the trainers. The workshop included sessions on components of essential newborn care, such as practical demonstrations (using mannequins) on resuscitation for birth asphyxia, prevention and treatment of common infections, and exposure to practical work with mothers and babies at Referral Centers in Bamako. The trainers were also encouraged to review the status and activities at their own sites and develop plans of action to be implemented on their return.

During the same period, the Deans of Medical Colleges from a number of African countries had organized a workshop on the prevention of infection and resuscitation for birth asphyxia for midwives. At the request of the MOH, USAID/BASICS participated in the workshop, making a presentation on resuscitation and carrying out demonstrations along with other pediatricians from Mali. This also provided an opportunity for interaction with midwives (including the President of the Association of Midwives), pediatricians, and some of the Deans to advocate for incorporation of these technical components of newborn health into pre-service training curricula.

Follow-up Activities carried out in Mali by MOH and In-country Partners

Key activities carried out after the BASICS supported National TOT by the MOH and the partners, UNICEF and Save the Children, included:

- Training of trainers in the regions of Kayes and Sikasso
- Training of facility health workers in three districts of Kayes and one district of Sikasso
- Donation of equipment for resuscitation by UNICEF
- Development of a supervision tool for Essential Newborn Care.
- Development of a Reference Manual on Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)
- Study tour to Rwanda to review activities related to KMC
- Training of staff and establishment of a KMC unit at Hospital Gabriel Toure and additional training at five other centers.