



## Improving the Quality of Maternal, Sexual and Reproductive Health Care in Women in Conflict Affected Parts of Syria

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava\*, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava and Jegadeesh Ramasamy

Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, India

### Introduction

Ensuring health and well-being of women during pregnancy and childbirth has been acknowledged as a global priority [1,2]. Nevertheless, the available global estimates indicate that one maternal death is reported every other minute somewhere across the world, which is a major cause of public health concern as most of them are from preventable causes [1]. Further, it has been observed that almost 99% of the deaths are from developing nations, which are fighting with the challenges of weak public health care delivery system, lack of infrastructure, and limited priority from the stakeholders towards maintenance of their health and basic rights [1-3].

As a matter of fact, the extent of the problem and the challenges increases extensively for women who are living in regions exposed to humanitarian emergencies [3,4]. This is quite evident as almost 67% of the maternal deaths are being reported in nations affected with some form of crisis [3,4]. The Syrian crisis has been devastating for civilians, with more than 6 million people being internally displaced [3]. At the same time, women have been extremely vulnerable to the negative consequences, as close to 4 million women and girls within the reproductive age-group have been affected by the crisis, including 0.36 million pregnant women [3]. Owing to the ongoing violence, women have been forced to migrate from their homes and live in shelter homes [2].

Moreover, a large number of maternal deaths have also been reported, which highlights the social concern, that even though, motherhood has been regarded as a period of joy for women, but most of the women living in conflict-affected parts have been exposed to fear and threat in these fragile settings [2-4]. Further, they have to deal

with the challenges of constant insecurity, unemployment, poverty and limited access to health services [2,4].

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has come forward to extend assistance to the pregnant women, and has established health clinics in conflict-affected parts of the nation [3]. These clinics provide a wide range of services like antenatal care, ultrasonography scan, sexual and reproductive health care, health checkups, counseling about family planning, and health-related information [3]. In addition, the under-nourished women are referred to avail the benefits of a monthly food voucher system (such as provision of fresh food, counseling on food items to be consumed during pregnancy or lactation, etc.), run by another international welfare agency [3]. Furthermore, the UNFPA is also assisting in setting up of the mobile clinics, training of health professionals, delivery of postnatal care, and in maintaining the supply of essential drugs & medical equipments [3].

To conclude, it is just the beginning of improving the nature and the reach of care for women & girls trapped in conflict settings, and a lot needs to be done to improve the quality of journey to motherhood.

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**\*Corresponding author:** Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, India; Tel: 919884227224; E-mail: [drshrishri2008@gmail.com](mailto:drshrishri2008@gmail.com)

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