

Two Decades of Investment for a Healthier Society (Part II)

Written by Kesete Ghebrehiwet



The second day of the Health Ministry's symposium opened with a study paper that discussed about the activities that have been carried out in maternal and child health care. Achievements in such health care delivery have been registered through concerted efforts in family and community health care. Dr. Birhana Haile, Director of family and community health at the ministry talked about health conditions of families and communities in 1991 and the achievements registered since then.

The principal objective of the family and community health department has been reduction in maternal and child mortality and morbidity that would be caused due to complication in pregnancy and in the time of delivery. Dr. Birahna also highlighted that broader coverage of health care services throughout the country and availability of medical equipment and sustainable supply of medicines played a major role for the achievements registered so far. As such the doctor stated that through broad coverage of vaccination and intensive antenatal and postnatal health care services and other interventions maternal mortality ratio has declined from 998 per 100,000 live births in 1995 to 486 in 2010 while mortality rate in under-five years of age has decreased form 148 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 63 in 2010.

Remarkable achievements that have been registered in health care services in general and in neonatal and postnatal care services in particular are results of concerted efforts and complementarity within different departments of the ministry. Obstetric care services have been introduced even in most remote areas of the country. Dr. Bereket Sibahatu, gynecologist, stated that with the increase in the coverage of attended delivery services, maternal and child mortality has substantially decreased. Owing to broader access to comprehensive emergency obstetric care which increased from 46% in 2006 to 84% in 2010 a number of pregnancy related complications have been prevented. Likewise, in his presentation on child health care services, Dr. Zemichael Oqbe, Director of Orola children's referral hospital said that the issue of infant care has been the focal point in the endeavors towards safe births and that high-tech medical equipment such as incubators, phototherapies, as well as radiant wormers are being steadily introduced.

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