IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION AND REFERRAL FOR MATERNAL HEALTH: STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

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Strategies and recommendations: topic areas

☐ **Multi-sectoral collaboration**

☐ **Mobile phone technology**

☐ **Public private partnerships**

☐ **Referral for newborns**

☐ **Indicators for referral**

☐ **Sharing evidence**

Referral – an orphan cause

- **"Under-documented, under-researched and under-theorized"**
- **Everybody's responsibility and therefore nobody's responsibility**
  - **Referral requires inputs from ministries of health, finance, roads and transport, communication and others**
- **Like most systems, the referral system is complex**
- **Much of a referral system is intangible**
- **We lack good indicators for referral**

Success requires multi-sectoral collaboration

- Health
- Finance
- Communications
- Transport
- Public works / roads
- Social welfare
- Security and defense

Mobile phone technology

- Increasing reach of mobile technologies
- Greater synchronization with referral desirable

  - Reduces delays in transport and treatment
    - Rapid identification of appropriate referral destination
    - Alerting arrival of referral
    - Enables telemedicine for triage and treatment

  - Facilitates referral feedback

Public private partnerships

- **Many successful examples exist but under explored**

  - **Toll free telephone numbers – call 108**
  - **Free calls between physicians**
  - **Private health workers/facilities paid by government for childbirth services**
  - **Trade or taxi unions**

Impact of referral on perinatal outcomes

- Further documentation on the neonate is critical

- How referral requirements for mother and baby differ?
  - How best to transport the baby?
  - Given a smaller window of opportunity to intervene with a sick newborn, what referral strategies should be adopted?

Indicators for referral

- Basic standards for referral are lacking
- Indicators should be based on those standards
- Indicators would lead to better assessment tools with which to identify deficiencies in the referral system

- A wide range of indicators (process, outcome and impact) is desirable

- Benchmarks or targets are largely unknown.

Sharing evidence & research utilization

- ☐ **Substantial evidence exists that is not well utilized**

- ☐ **Pooling of evidence is needed**

- ☐ **Recognition that less than perfect evidence should not be a barrier to further action**