

5. Hospital data on newborn care are used to change clinical practices

A newborn infant dies every two minutes in the Western Pacific Region. In 2013, Member States endorsed the *Action Plan for Healthy Newborn Infants in the Western Pacific Region (2014–2020)*, which promotes universal access to early essential newborn care (EENC). As over 90% of women in the Region deliver in hospitals, the plan emphasizes EENC in health-care facilities.

The use of hospital data has helped change clinical practices, thereby improving quality of care. Hospitals implementing EENC form teams that regularly

assess care. The teams interview mothers, observe deliveries and hospital hygiene, and review patient charts, hospital policies, medicines and supplies. The teams then analyse data to identify priority concerns and actions to address them.

Many issues can be solved quickly and easily at the local level. In the Philippines, for example, newborn babies receiving uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact with their mothers increased from 11% (one out of nine) to 77% (more than three out of four) from 2008 to 2015. One hospital found that weighing newborn babies in

the delivery room interfered with uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact, which is a key priority of EENC, so the team simply moved the scale out of the delivery room.

Learning about EENC, the National Referral Hospital team in Solomon Islands revamped its delivery room to facilitate care. For example, resuscitation areas were moved to within two metres of delivery beds to accelerate aid to babies not breathing at birth. During a follow-up assessment, a mother recounted how her baby was not breathing at birth, but she witnessed as the team deftly brought back breath and life to her baby.

Through interviews with mothers, a private hospital in central Viet Nam found that if it stopped offering skin-to-skin contact, it would lose clients and profit. Nationwide in Viet Nam, similar assessments revealed a high demand for skin-to-skin contact and higher satisfaction of participating mothers. Although the duration of skin-to-skin contact needs to be improved, nine out of 10 newborn babies in Viet Nam are currently placed in immediate skin-to-skin contact with their mothers. This is quality time that saves lives. ■

In a hospital in Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam, health workers support mothers for Kangaroo Mother Care, which includes skin-to-skin contact and exclusive breastfeeding. This simple intervention can reduce mortality in preterm babies by up to 50%.

