WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist

Of the more than 130 million births occurring each year, an estimated 303,000 result in the mother’s death, 2.6 million in stillbirth, and another 2.7 million in a newborn death. Almost half of these deaths occur during labor and childbirth and most could have been prevented with quality care around the time of birth.

The WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist Pilot Edition followed a rigorous methodology and was tested for usability in ten countries across Africa and Asia. Recently, the checklist has been updated based on the newly released WHO guidelines (e.g. Management of Preterm Birth). To support the implementation of the checklist, WHO also provided an implementation guide (available for download here [2]). There is also a new page designed to help care providers to implement the Checklist.

Currently, the USAID ASSIST Mali team is implementing the SCC in Mali. At its initial stage, the SCC seems to be an effective provider decision support tool. The checklist also provides significant opportunity to generate information about the essential care practices that are not documented otherwise through routine medical information. This provides a significant opportunity to routinely assess the quality of maternal and newborn care and document the progress of essential process and outcome measures around childbirth. The checklist is simple and can be easily adapted to particular settings, although its standardized format gives opportunity to generate comparable data and conduct cross-country comparisons on compliance with the best maternal and newborn care practices.