A multi-faceted regional learning platform to support maternal, newborn and child health improvement efforts in the WHO South-East Asia Region

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A mother sits with her child in Madhya Pradesh, India. Photo credit: Amit Reddy

In 2015, WHO-SEARO, the WHO Collaborating Center for Training and Research in Newborn Care (at AIIMS, New Delhi) and ASSIST came together to develop a simple, straightforward training model to guide QI teams, and the coaches and leadership that support them, in improving the quality of care for mothers and newborns - and with this, POCQI was born. This month, the POCQI team initiates a webinar series to teach QI methods and share results from the region.

All our efforts to improve healthcare ultimately aim to transform what happens when the patient interacts with the health system. Those at the frontlines of care – doctors, nurses, patients, allied health staff and community members – are usually best placed to solve many local problems in quality of care and must be actively engaged in quality improvement efforts. Also, frontline health workers should be supported in their improvement efforts by leadership.

In this effort World Health Organization, South-East Asia Regional Office (WHO SEARO) has been working at two levels with member states:

1. **Country capacity building** for preparing national structures and plans for QI
2. **Capacity building of frontline healthcare teams** in undertaking QI in their own settings and sharing with others in the region.

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To support the involvement of frontline health workers in quality improvement, the [Point of Care Quality Improvement (POCQI)](https://www.usaidassist.org) model has been developed by WHO-SEARO, WHO Collaborating Center for Training and Research in Newborn Care at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, and the USAID ASSIST Project, and is supported by UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID and WHO. This model uses case-based examples to teach quality improvement. It aims to demystify quality improvement methods and make it easy for frontline workers to start using improvement methods.

**Most frontline QI teams need support in applying QI to their context and setting.**
For this teams need ongoing coaching support, avenues to share their learning, opportunities build their QI skills and a system for follow-up support and guidance.

To meet this need, WHO-SEARO, WHO Collaborating Center for Training and Research in Newborn Care at AIIMS and WHO Collaborating Center for Research in Human Reproduction at AIIMS have joined hands to establish a regional learning platform for quality improvement across 10 countries in the region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

This platform includes four ways in which countries and facility teams are being supported in their QI efforts:

1. **In-person trainings, workshops and coaching** visits for quality improvement capacity building have already been held in several countries of region. There is a pool of POCQI trainers among the faculty at AIIMS and network of experts convened by them. In-country training expertise is being built over time by providing opportunities for co-facilitation during trainings.

2. **Remote coaching support**: A pool of healthcare professionals who have experience in QI has been formed. These experienced members have been assigned to support hospital teams in the countries which have been recently trained in POCQI and are new to quality improvement methods. This support will be provided remotely by phone or by conference calls. It is hoped that over time each of the member countries can have their own pool of coaches to support QI approaches more widely within each country.

3. **Dedicated website**: The Point of Care Quality Improvement website ([www.pocqi.org](http://www.pocqi.org)) has been developed to house and share a wealth of resources and information:
   - Training materials, including the [POCQI Learner’s Manual](http://www.pocqi.org) and the [POCQI Facilitator’s Manual](http://www.pocqi.org).
   - [POCQI Virtual Workbook](http://www.pocqi.org): This is a case-based e-learning tool in the POCQI model.
   - [Video lectures](http://www.pocqi.org) on quality improvement.
   - QI experiences from hospital teams: [QI project posters](http://www.pocqi.org) and [QI project videos](http://www.pocqi.org).
   - Country Report pages, for each country to share their progress with the network.
   - Technical resources, like recent publications.

4. **Webinars**: A series of webinars was launched this May. Two types of webinars will be held:
   - **Teaching webinars**: QI topics will be discussed to strengthen the QI skills and knowledge of participants.
   - **Sharing webinars**: Teams from various countries will share their QI projects with other teams of the region to spread learning.

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The first webinar of the regional platform, in which we discussed the progress of quality improvement efforts in the WHO South-East Asia Region, was held on 17th May 2018 ([watch the recording](http://www.pocqi.org) | [download the presentation](http://www.pocqi.org)). Information on resources and support for healthcare teams in their quality improvement efforts was shared with attendees. The webinar was attended by participants from both government and partner organizations and also frontline health workers from nine countries across the region.

We received positive feedback on this first webinar. Several participants volunteered to share their quality improvement activities in future webinars and many were interested in starting QI activities. Some participants expressed the need for additional support in carrying out QI work. We will be reaching out to these participants and connecting them with their coaches who can provide more consistent guidance to them.

We hope this multi-faceted platform will enable collaborative learning and help build the momentum and capacity of healthcare teams and stakeholders in the region to improve quality of maternal and newborn healthcare.

*The next POCQI webinar will be held on Thursday, May 31st at 12:00pm Delhi time*
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(2:30am Washington, D.C.; 13:30 Jakarta)

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