

## Training Midwives and Other Cadre of Health Workers Using a Solar-Charged Device in Ethiopia

Dear Editor,

Ensuring the wellbeing of pregnant women and providing them with appropriate care and support for a good outcome has been acknowledged as one of the most important public health priorities of the health sector.<sup>[1,2]</sup> Even though a wide range of potential risk factors can result in maternal deaths, it has been identified that provision of skilled care during and after the birth of the child can save the lives of thousands of women and newborn child.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

However, considering the shortage of primary care physicians or obstetricians in the rural settings, midwives and nursing staff have been identified as potential candidates for the delivery of essential care during childbirths.<sup>[1]</sup> At the same time, these midwives have been assigned the task of offering antenatal care, creating awareness among members of the community regarding the services offered in health facilities, motivate women for institutional delivery, and referring women to higher centers for management of high-risk women.<sup>[1,3]</sup>

Realizing the scope of the midwives in meeting the global reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health-related goals, especially in rural and remote settings, there is a great need to not only increase their numbers but even augment their capabilities by organizing periodic training sessions, as well as by providing them technology-based assistance to improve their understanding regarding different obstetric situations.<sup>[1,3,4]</sup> Different forms of training (theoretical and practical) sessions and evaluation methods have been adopted for the skill development of midwives. However, because of the lack of periodicity of these sessions, significant gaps have been identified in the execution and coordination of outreach programs, detection of common obstetric and gynecological conditions, and offering appropriate guidance and counseling to the women.<sup>[4]</sup> In addition, substantial competence gaps that restrict the ability of midwives to expedite the progress toward the accomplishment of the health-related development goals.<sup>[3,4]</sup>

In an attempt to improve the competence of midwives in Ethiopia, a portal device has been developed, which works on solar battery and contains preloaded multimedia training lessons.<sup>[4]</sup> It is a mobile-based learning system working on Android technology.<sup>[4]</sup> The portable device contains lessons which cover a wide range of topics, namely the importance of antenatal care, ways to identify danger signs, necessity to be prepared for anticipated complications, management of obstetric complications, post-abortion care, nutrition, family planning, and essential newborn care.<sup>[3,4]</sup> These

training materials are the result of collaborative work of the United Nations Population Fund, World Health Organization, and Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics, and are in accordance with the international standards.<sup>[4]</sup>

Since the launch of the device in March 2016, more than 2700 midwives and health workers have been trained, and it has been very well accepted by the trainees.<sup>[4]</sup> The device has improved the quality of education, the skills of health workers in managing complications and their empowerment to provide respectful health care services, and has been also used for mentoring health professionals working in remote health institutions.<sup>[3,4]</sup> Moreover, as the device works on solar power, it has neutralized the challenges of interrupted electricity supply or poor internet connectivity, which is extremely common in rural areas.<sup>[4]</sup>

To conclude, there is an immense need to empower midwives to ensure that they provide sensitive and quality-assured healthcare to pregnant women so that they can remember it as a positive pregnancy experience.

### Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

**Saurabh R. Shrivastava<sup>1</sup>,  
Prateek S. Shrivastava<sup>1</sup>,  
Jegadeesh Ramasamy<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Ammapettai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

### Address for correspondence:

Dr Saurabh R. Shrivastava,  
Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Ammapettai Village, Thiruporur - Guduvancherry Main Road, Sembakkam Post, Kancheepuram - 603 108, Tamil Nadu, India.  
E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com

### References

1. World Health Organization. Maternal mortality-Fact sheet N°348; 2016. Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/> [Last accessed on 2016 Dec 8].
2. Shifraw T, Berhane Y, Gulema H, Kendall T, Austin A. A qualitative study on factors that influence women's choice of delivery in health facilities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth* 2016;16:307.
3. Yigzaw T, Carr C, Stekelenburg J, van Roosmalen J, Gibson H, Gelagay M, *et al.* Using task analysis to generate evidence for

Letter to Editor

strengthening midwifery education, practice, and regulation in Ethiopia. *Int J Womens Health* 2016;8:181-90.

- UNFPA. New device brings midwifery education to remote, offline communities; 2016. Available from: <http://www.unfpa.org/news/new-device-brings-midwifery-education-remote-offline-communities> [Last accessed on 2016 Dec 9].

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

| Access this article online  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Quick Response Code:</b><br> | <b>Website:</b><br><a href="http://www.ijnmrjournal.net">www.ijnmrjournal.net</a> |
|   | <b>DOI:</b><br>10.4103/ijnmr.IJNMR_229_16   |

**How to cite this article:** Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS, Ramasamy J. Training midwives and other cadre of health workers using a solar-charged device in Ethiopia. *Iranian J Nursing Midwifery Res* 2017;22:170-1.

**Received:** December, 2016. **Accepted:** January, 2017.  
© 2017 Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow

