

SEA-HS-217

Report of the Meeting of the
Informal Working Group
for the
Preparation of Guidelines for
Investigating Maternal Mortality

Bangkok, Thailand, 9-15 March 2000

WHO Project: ICP GPE 001



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Report of the Meeting

The second informal meeting of the working group for the preparation of guidelines for investigating maternal mortality was held from 9 through 15 March 2000 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was opened with a brief review of the background work already done, followed by self-introduction of the participants. The group members at this meeting included one staff member from WHO headquarters, one from UNAIDS in Geneva, two from the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, and ten technical experts representing five WHO regions (Africa, America, Europe, South-East Asia and Western Pacific). The list of participants is provided at Annex 1.

After self-introductions, the objectives of the meeting (Annex 2) and tentative programme of work (Annex 3) were reviewed and discussed. Some changes were made in the order in which the specific topics on the tentative programme of work would be taken up.

Over the course of the meeting, all the draft sections of the guidelines were critically reviewed. As many suggested changes as possible were incorporated into these drafts during the meeting itself. Other comments and suggested revisions were noted by the respective authors and will be incorporated later, according to the time-table established for the remaining work to be done (Annex 4).

There was considerable discussion at various points during the meeting regarding the title of this document. It was felt important that the title clearly indicate "action" as the end result of applying the investigative methods which are described. It was considered that the primary focus of the guidelines was still maternal deaths. Hence the title agreed to was *Investigating maternal deaths: Generating information for action*. It was also decided that the document would be called a "guide" rather than "guidelines".

The specific contents of the guide and their order were discussed and revised. It was noted that emphasis should be given throughout the guide to the use of the four investigative methods for improving the quality of care. The working group felt that adverse perinatal events should be mentioned in the document wherever relevant, but that there should not be a separate section in the guide to discuss these events.

There was extensive discussion about the use of the investigative methods for ongoing review and individual feedback for training and learning purposes, as well as for the use of the aggregated information they generate from a policy and decision-making perspective. There was also considerable discussion about the use of certain terms in the publication, especially audit, standards, criteria, and near misses. It was decided that a section on terminology would be added to Chapter 2, that certain terms would be addressed in the introduction to Chapter 3, and that a glossary of terms would be included.

Chapters 5 and 6 of the publication, which have not yet been drafted, were discussed in terms of general contents. A number of topics were noted which should be addressed within these chapters, including validation and effectiveness of the methods, validating results, quality control, cost analysis, the field-testing process, and relevant research issues. It was decided that a small research group would be established by WHO headquarters to provide further input to these chapters, especially to Chapter 6.

The work plan for finalizing the publication, the time-frame for its completion, and the persons responsible for each action were discussed. The time-table attached as Annex 4 reflects the decisions made for each of the sections in the guide. Overall coordination of the activities will be the responsibility of Dr R. Guidotti, Reproductive Health and Research, WHO Geneva. In conclusion, it was noted that this meeting of the informal working group had accomplished a substantial amount of work in terms of critiquing the draft guide and in preparing for its completion.

Annex 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Annex 2

OBJECTIVES

1. To critically review and edit the draft guidelines for investigating maternal mortality.
2. To review examples of country experiences as cited for each of the four methods.
3. To identify two countries for each of the four approaches that will be suitable for case studies of country experiences, as well as potential authors for the sections.
4. To develop a workplan for finalization of the guidelines including time frame, budget, designation of responsibility for writing and coordinating, etc.

Annex 3

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF WORK

- Day 1**
- General introduction and background to the meeting
 - Self introduction of participants
 - Review of the tentative programme of work
 - Review of draft guidelines relative to examples of country experiences provided within the sections on confidential enquiry, maternal death case review, clinical audit, verbal autopsy and near misses
 - Review of potential countries and persons for preparation of case studies of country experiences (two for each of the four approaches)
 - Finalization of work plan for preparation of case studies of country experiences, including time frame, budget, designation of responsibilities for writing and coordinating, etc.
- Days 2, 3 & 4**
- Indepth critical review and editing of the draft guidelines:
1. Introduction
 2. Definitions and case ascertainment
 3. Description of investigative methods
 - clinical audit
 - confidential enquiry
 - maternal death case review
 - verbal autopsy
 - near misses
 - perinatal outcomes (subject to availability of draft documents)
 - dissemination and use of findings
 - research needs, validation, etc.
- Critical review of general contents and formatting issues, etc.
- Day 5**
- Development of work plan for finalization of the main sections of the guidelines, including time frame, budget, designation of responsibilities for writing and coordinating, etc.

Annex 4

TIME-TABLE FOR COMPLETING THE GUIDE FOR INVESTIGATING MATERNAL MORTALITY

	Person responsible	
Revise and add to Chapters 1 and 2	Cynthia Berg	31 March 2000
Write Introduction of Chapter 3, after completion of all relevant sections	WHO/HQ	31 July 2000
Write section on terminology, including "audit"	WHO/HQ	31 July 2000
Revise 3.1 Criterion-based clinical audit	Dugald Baird Centre	31 March 2000
Revise 3.3 Maternal death case review, Nepal case study, and gather and add information from the literature on aggregate findings of case reviews	Dugald Baird Centre	30 April 2000
Write country experience on case reviews in West and North Africa	Carine Ronsmans	30 April 2000
Add examples of pre-established criteria to box on Brazil case review country experience	Ruy Laurenti	31 March 2000
Inform author of revisions needed to Section 3.4 Confidential enquiries	Wendy Graham	31 March 2000
Contact Dr Selvaraju about Malaysia case study	Carla AbouZahr	31 March 2000
Write country case study on Malaysia experience on confidential enquiry	Dr Selvaraju	15 April 2000
Send country experience information on confidential enquiries in the Netherlands, Surinam, Jamaica, South Africa and Malaysia to author	WHO/HQ	15 April 2000
Revise 3.4 Confidential enquiries	Gillian McIlwaine	30 April 2000

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	Person responsible	
Write box on country experience of confidential enquiries in South Africa	Eddie Mhlanga	15 April 2000
Revise 3.3 Verbal autopsy	Carine Ronsmans	15 April 2000
Contact Ana Langer about Mexico case study	Carla AbouZahr	31 March 2000
Write case study on Mexico experience with verbal autopsy	Ana Langer	15 April 2000
Write Chapter 4: Investigating maternal morbidities	Carine Ronsmans	15 April 2000
Draft Chapters 5 and 6: Analyzing and using the findings for action, and Research needs, etc.	WHO/HQ	30 June 2000
Obtain inputs from experts ¹ on Chapters 5 and 6	WHO/HQ	15 July 2000
Finalize Chapters 5 and 6	WHO/HQ	31 July 2000
Edit draft document	WHO/HQ	30 Sept 2000
Print and disseminate document	WHO/HQ	31 Dec 2000

¹ Cindy Stanton, Ana Langer, Jose Villar and Luc de Beevis (WHO/HQ)