

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF RESPECTFUL MATERNITY CARE IN NIGERIA THE UNIVERSAL RIGHTS OF CHILDBEARING WOMEN

Background

Nigeria is currently making some degree of progress in reducing maternal and child mortality and morbidity. However, every year in Nigeria 40,000 women and 242,000 newborn still die. These indices rank Nigeria as the second highest contributor to the burden of maternal deaths worldwide. This ranking is despite the fact that there is an actual drop in maternal mortality ratio (MMR). This also indicates that Nigeria is not making sufficient progress as compared to other countries and at this pace may not achieve the MDG 4 and 5 by 2015. Preventable maternal mortality is a violation of the rights to life, health and dignity of women in Nigeria. There is growing evidence of disrespect and abuse that prevents women from accessing skilled care from Government/public health facilities in Nigeria.

In every country and community worldwide, pregnancy and childbirth are momentous events in the lives of women and families and represent a time of intense vulnerability. The concept of "safe motherhood" is usually restricted to physical safety, but childbearing is also an important rite of passage, with deep personal and cultural significance for a woman and her family. Because motherhood is specific to women, issues of gender equity and gender violence are also at the core of maternity care. Thus, the notion of safe motherhood must be expanded beyond the prevention of morbidity or mortality to encompass respect for women's basic human rights, including respect for women's autonomy, dignity, feelings, choices, and preferences, including choice of companionship wherever possible.



Assertion of the Universal Rights of Childbearing Women

This Charter aims to address the issue of disrespect and abuse among women seeking maternity care and provide a platform for improvement by:

- * Raising awareness of childbearing women's inclusion in the guarantees of human rights recognized in internationally adopted United Nations and other multinational declarations, conventions, and covenants;
- * Highlighting the connection between human rights language and key program issues relevant to maternity care;
- * Increasing the capacity of maternal health advocates to participate in human rights processes;
- * Aligning childbearing women's sense of entitlement to high quality maternity care with international human rights community standards; and

OUR REQUEST TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON HEALTH

Approve the adoption and domestication of The Universal Rights of Childbearing Women (Respectful Maternity Care Charter and support its implementation at all levels of care



THE WHITE
RIBBON
ALLIANCE
HEALTHY MOTHERS
HEALTHY WORD



The Federal Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood, call on all policy makers and health workers to uphold the Universal Rights of Childbearing Women and provide Respectful Maternity Care to all women in Nigeria.

The Universal Rights of Childbearing Women

In seeking and receiving maternity care before, during and after childbirth every woman has the right to:

Be free from harm and ill treatment

No one can physically abuse you

Information, informed consent and refusal, and respect for her choices and preferences, including companionship during maternity care

No one can force you or do things to you without your knowledge and consent

Privacy and confidentiality

No one can expose you or your personal information

Be treated with the dignity and respect

No one can humiliate or verbally abuse you

Equality, freedom from discrimination and equitable care

No one can discriminate because of something they do not like about you

Healthcare and to the highest attainable level of health

No one can prevent you from getting the maternity care you need

Liberty, autonomy, self-determination and freedom from coercion

No one can detain you or your baby without legal authority

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