



Key Insights on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health Indicators in Zimbabwe between 2019-2023



Introduction

Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) remains a global health priority area with specific Sustainable Development Goal targets to be achieved by 2030. Zimbabwe, as part of twenty-six Sub Saharan African countries under the Countdown to 2030 consortium, participated in a multi-country analysis workshop entitled “Producing reliable national and subnational health statistics with a focus on reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition”.

A thorough assessment of health facility data was conducted, focusing on both numerators and denominators to ensure accurate reporting. This policy brief outlines the key outputs from analyzing the five-year district health facility data together with recent national surveys and global estimates aiming to inform stakeholders about health outcomes and guide policy decisions to improve RMNCAH+N services in Zimbabwe.

Highlights

The findings suggest that health facility data quality is crucial for effective monitoring and evaluation of health programs.

- Zimbabwe’s health facility data is of high quality, scoring 85% with over 90% monthly reporting completeness. However, further strengthening of data quality at subnational level and health service access is needed for improved maternal and child health outcomes.
- Community integration has led to improvements in ANC coverage and immunization, particularly Penta3, but provincial disparities persist, especially in the underserved metropolitan provinces with well below the recommended 2 per 10,000 population health facilities.
- Access to skilled birth attendants has improved, but areas with high maternal mortality rates require attention.
- Family planning service utilization has remained constant and below the national target, and there remains a need for better education and effective provision of care at all levels.
- Across the RMNCAH+N indicators, inequalities, particularly between rural and urban areas and different wealth quintiles remain evident.
- The completeness of maternal deaths reporting by facilities in Zimbabwe is below 32%. High maternal deaths to stillbirth’s ratio remains as the system is currently designed to save the mothers and less focused on newborn care.
- Postnatal Care within 48 hours is high (>80%), however subsequent Postnatal Care visits have steadily declined since 2019. Low birth weight prevalence is generally low and stagnant in Zimbabwe at 7%. Increased focus on Intrapartum Care and Postnatal Care is necessary to improve newborn outcomes and reduce low birth weight instances.
- Outpatient visits for children under five have increased, but case fatality rates indicate a need for improved treatment protocols and access to care.

Analysis of Coverage and Equity

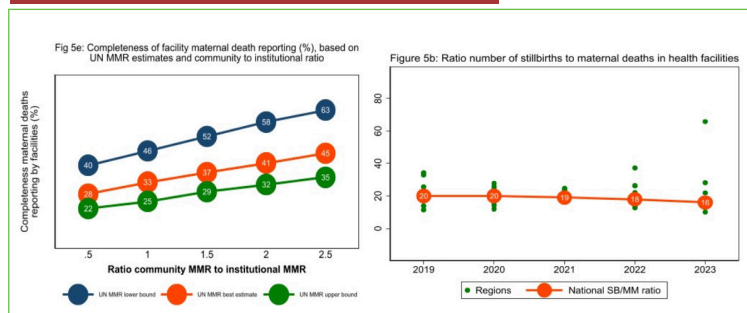
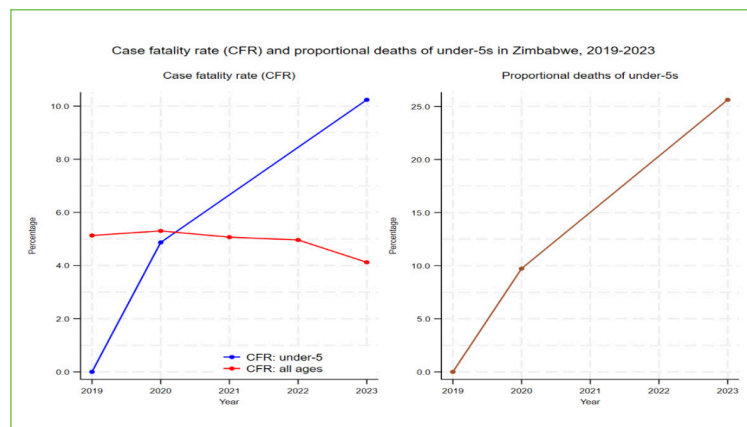
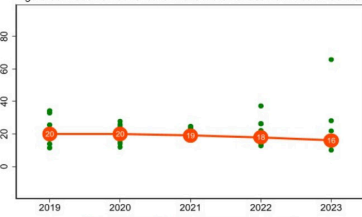


Figure 5b: Ratio number of stillbirths to maternal deaths in health facilities



Recommendations for Policy and Practice

To achieve universal health coverage and improve RMNCAH+N outcomes, the following recommendations are proposed:



Focus on Maternal and Newborn Health Service Quality: Develop targeted interventions to address maternal mortality and stillbirths, ensuring quality care during pregnancy and childbirth.



Enhance Data Quality at Subnational Level and Data Use at Point of Generation: This is key to support health service quality improvement. Investing in systems such as the Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response to improve the accuracy of health indicators.



Strengthen Health Infrastructure: Utilize targeted interventions and resource allocation to focus on equitable distribution of health services, particularly in underserved areas such as the urban provinces to address disparities in health service access.



Increase Community Engagement: Consider pursuing progress achieved through community interventions that improve maternal child health outcomes, including initiatives aimed at improving health literacy and access

Conclusion

Analysis of the 2019 -2023 district routine data together with national surveys and global estimates underscores the urgent need for targeted policies and interventions to improve RMNCAH+N outcomes in Zimbabwe. Improving data quality and addressing inequities in health service access will aid the nation to make significant strides toward achieving universal health coverage and improving the health and wellbeing of its population.