

Neonatal Mortality in Somalia

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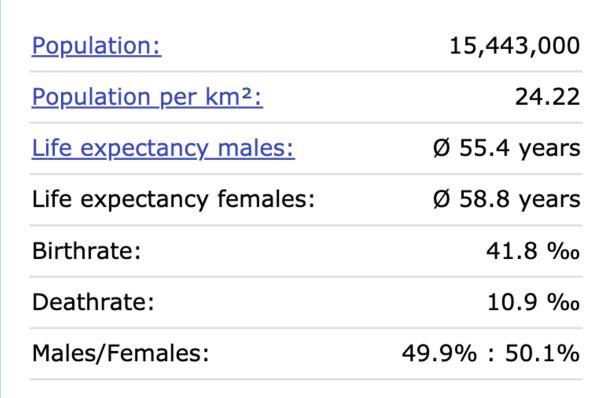
Introduction

In Somalia, there has been an ongoing issue of high neonatal mortality rates. Due to lack of medical supplies, clean water, and nutritious food, it is hard for Somalis to give birth to healthy babies and once born, keep them healthy. Due to millions of these neonates dying in Somalia, families suffer from the loss of a child. Mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters must take the psychological toll of losing a child or sibling and try to continue on with their everyday lives. Another problem that Somalis face is a decrease in their population. Although their census' are not very accurate, it still puts them at a very high mortality rate for neonates .[1]

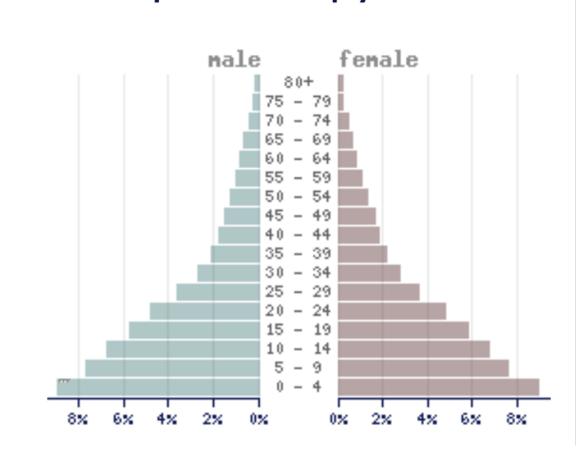
Community Assessment and Analysis

- 4 out of every 100 children die during the first month of life, 8 out of
 every 100 before they turn 1 year old, and 1 out of 8 children before age
 5 [2]
- 45 stillbirths occur everyday [2]
- Mortality rate for neonates are 40 deaths every 1,000 births [2]
- 1 out of 12 women die every year during pregnancy or childbirth [2]
- 80% of newborn deaths are from prematurity, asphyxia, problems during birth, pneumonia, measles, or neonatal disorders [2]
- 1.2 million children were affected by malnutrition [2]
- 52% of Somalia has access to a basic water supply [2]
- 3.3 million Somali's are in need of health services[2]
- Somalia's population is 15 million [3]
- The role of a women is to stay in the house, cook, clean and take care of children [4]
- Somalis are nomadic [1]
- Almost all Somalis are Sunni Muslims [1]
- Most births happen at home with a midwife [1]
- Breastfeeding is best for Somali women [1]
- Limited access to doctors [1]
- Al-Shabaab bans the Red Cross [5]

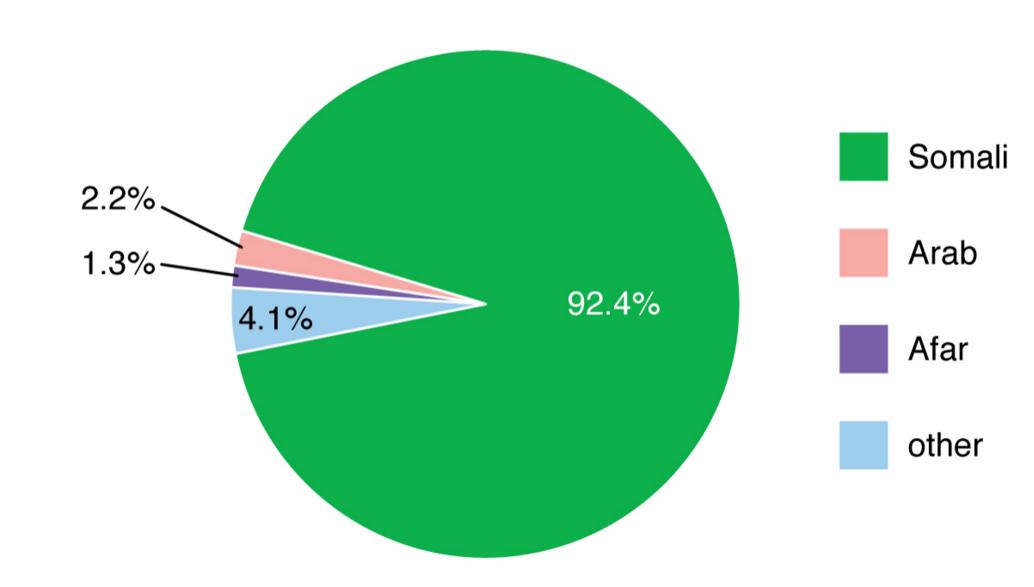
Population



Population pyramid



Ethnic composition (2000)



Problem In the Community

- Globally, Somalia holds the greatest threat with a neonatal mortality rate of 36.9 percent.
- Most common cause of death is due to "preterm birth, intrapartum-related complications (birth asphyxia or lack of breathing at birth), infections and birth defects." {6}
- Birth asphyxia is when the baby is depleted of oxygen during birth long enough that there is damage to the brain.
- The infections that cause death in neonates include sepsis pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria.
- "Babies born to mothers with no education face almost twice the risk of dying during the newborn period as babies born to mothers with at least a secondary education." {7}

Problem In the Community, Cont.

- "Babies born to the poorest families are more than 40 per cent more likely to die during the newborn period than those born to the least poor." {7}
- Somalia is relatively poor, and they do not have access to education or healthcare.
- When comparing the rates of neonatal mortality to those of the
 United States we notice that the numbers of the US are a lot
 better than Somalia.
- The United States had a rate of 5.8 infant deaths out of 1000 which is .58%. {8}
- This puts Somalia at 63.6 times higher than the United States.
- In the United States, there are "well-functioning midwife programmes," and in settings with these programs, "the provision of midwife led continuity of care (MLCC) can reduce preterm births by up to 24%." {8}
- MLCC "is a model of care in which a midwife or a team of midwives provide care to the same woman throughout her pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period" {7}
- Many mothers do not stay in the facilities as long as suggested, which is 24 hours post delivery. This could be due to low income or poverty which does not allow for the mother to utilize the same quality of resources for the length of time that more wealthy mothers are able to.
- 24 hours post delivery is the most essential time for the newborn as it adapts to its new environment. Without the proper care, the newborn is at risk for death due to complications.
- The infant mortality rate is a great representation of the overall health status of the community. This includes the poverty levels and socioeconomic status levels within the general neighborhood and the availability of quality health services and medical technology. {9}



Solution

Our proposed solution involves our innovative health program, *Right*Foot, that targets the specific community health goal of having safer
deliveries and lower infection rates in Somalia by focusing on educating the
community on three major key factors: Infection prevention, proper
postpartum care, and proper training of traditional birth attendants. *Right*Foot was designed to ensure every family in Somalia going forward has an
opportunity to start or add their beautiful new addition to their families on
the right foot and not with tragedy or complications that could have been
prevented.

Infection is one of the top causes of neonatal mortality in Somalia. The solution to this problem heavily focuses on educating the community on infection prevention. Lack of quality care at birth or skilled care and treatment after birth are directly related to neonatal mortality in Somalia. The power of spreading awareness and in education will create a ripple effect that will allow the Somalian people best tackle this issue.

Right Foot's success will be due to its specific program activities
that will help the population understand the proposed solution to their high
rates of neonatal mortality. The goal is to help implement these activities all
over Somalia and for it to hopefully later become their new standard of care.
Key activities include in person training of attendants, family education, and
access to education information for the community. These activities are led
by three learning objectives for Somalia that were created for Right Foot.
These learning objectives include:

- understanding effective infection control practices
- obtaining proper postpartum care

1) Thaver D, Zaidi AK. Burden of Neonatal Infections in Developing Countries. Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal. 2009;28(1).

- educating birth attendants using a teach-back method

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