Maternal and Perinatal Death Investigation and Verification
Presentation Outline

- Objectives of the Module
- Introduction
- The Deaths Investigation Process - Community
- The Verbal Autopsy Forms
- The Death Investigation Process - Health Facilities
- The Health Facility Data Abstraction Forms
- Summary Exercises
Objectives of the Module

- After Completing this module Trainees are expected to acquire the following knowledge and skills

  ⇒ Introduce to major principles and prerequisites for maternal and perinatal death investigation

  ⇒ Understand the process for maternal and perinatal death investigation in the community and health facilities

  ⇒ Acquire the skills to properly use and code the maternal and perinatal death investigation tools
Introduction

- The objectives of maternal and perinatal death investigation are:
  - Verify the suspected death
  - Collect information on possible causes and contributing factors
- Effective investigation of maternal and perinatal death requires:
  - Mapping and using all appropriate information sources
  - Approach information sources ethically and sympathetically
  - Using and recording the death investigation tools accurately
All deaths fulfilling the suspected or standard case definition should be investigated

**Community- Perinatal**
The birth of a dead foetus or death of a new born after 7 month of pregnancy +
New born dead at the time of birth OR within 28 days of delivery

**Community- Maternal**
Death of a woman of reproductive age group (between 15-49 years of age) +
Died while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy or missed her menses before she died

**Health Facility- Perinatal**
A death of a fetus born after 28 completed weeks of gestation or neonatal deaths through the first 28 completed days after birth

**Health Facility- Maternal**
The death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy (irrespective of duration and site of pregnancy), from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes
Deaths Investigation Process - Community

- All suspected maternal and perinatal deaths should be investigated by the health extension worker
- The community death investigation should be conducted within two weeks in order to:
  - Give adequate mourning period for families
  - Reduce the recall biases
Community Deaths Investigation CONT . .

- The health extension worker uses the standard verbal autopsy tool to verify and investigate maternal and perinatal deaths in the community

- Information sources to complete verbal autopsy includes,
  - Families of the deceased mother /neonate who were around the during the death circumstance
  - Traditional birth attendants- if applicable
  - Any community member who were around the deceased during the death circumstance
Community Deaths Investigation CONT . .

- Before start of interview proper oral consent should be taken and the consent information needs to contain:
  - Introduce your self
  - The objectives of the investigation
  - The confidentiality of the information provide

- Before and during the interview process respectful, sympathetic and culturally right approaches should be followed.
The objective of verbal autopsy is to verify the suspected deaths in the community and collect basic information to identify possible causes and contributing factors.

Verbal autopsy is used by health extension workers only for maternal and perinatal death which fulfill the community suspected cased definition.

There is a separate verbal autopsy forms for maternal deaths and perinatal deaths.
The verbal autopsy form for maternal death contains five sections to be completed for all suspected maternal deaths in the community.

The verbal autopsy form for perinatal death contains nine parts and to be completed for all suspected perinatal deaths in the community.

When both the mother and the neonate are deceased maternal and perinatal verbal autopsy forms should be completed.
Community Level Data Capture (verbal Autopsy)
Verbal Autopsies

• Collect data from family members, friends, neighbors, and potentially HEW on circumstances around death
• Help construct the “pathway to death” including background factors
• Investigates
  – the woman’s or the babies health issues,
  – decisions about care,
  – services received, and
  – community factors (e.g. Transportation)
Community Data Collection - process

Any community member can alert HEW about deaths of women 15-49

– HEW identify deaths, report them as part of PHEM, screen for maternal causes, and notify HC

– Data from VA presented at the HC review committee
Logistical Issues

• Timing is important – VA should be conducted after the mourning period, but before key details are forgotten (roughly 2 weeks after the death)
• Important to find respondents familiar with the case and events leading up to it
• Families may have separated or moved
Ethical Issues

- Maternal and Perinatal deaths are emotional events.
- Grief of the family must be respected.
- Information provided must be voluntary.
- There should be no repercussions for family members’ actions.
- The VA process can raise sensitive issues requiring support (disagreements, abortion, lack of available care).
Informed Consent

- Formally establishes voluntary participation
- Reassures family members
- Can offer legal protection to communities
- Builds rapport and trust before starting data collection
Informed Consent:

When obtaining Informed Consent, remember to mention ...

– Purpose of the VA interview
– What will happen during the interview
– Risks involved (feeling uncomfortable, sad)
– Benefits (avoiding future deaths)
– Confidentiality
– Voluntary participation
Steps in Conducting VA:

- Planning a community visit
- Approaching the household
- Selecting the best respondent(s)
- Obtaining Informed Consent
- Conducting the VA interview
- Recording the information accurately
- Submitting the filled format to the Health Centre
Best Practices for Verbal Autopsy (1)

- Friendly approach – Explain the purpose of your visit in positive terms
- Ensure privacy – Interviews will go more smoothly if you are undisturbed
- Speak slowly & clearly – explain anything that the respondent doesn’t understand
- Probe for detailed information
There are NO “right answers” - let respondents tell their story in their own words

Take notes – write down additional relevant information in the blank spaces of the VA form

Pay attention – show that you are listening & aware of respondents’ emotions
Deaths Investigation Process- Health Facilities

- All maternal and perinatal deaths which fulfil the standard case definitions should be investigated.
- The health facility death investigation should be conducted within 1 week in order to:
  - Get all the necessary medical registers timely
  - Reduce the recall biases
  - Avail timely information for service quality improvement
- The surveillance officer uses the standard facility data abstraction form to investigate and verify maternal and perinatal deaths in the health facility.
Information sources to complete data abstraction includes,
- Medical records- client chart, registers, death logs, operation notes
- Health care providers in the facility who involved in the provision of health care

Before start of interview with health care providers proper consent should be taken and the consent information needs to contain
- Introduce your self (if useful)
- The objectives of the investigation
- The no bale principles of the MPDSR
- The confidentiality of the information provide
The objective of the facility data abstraction form is to verify deaths in the health facilities and collect basic information to identify possible causes and contributing factors.

Facility-based data abstraction form is used by surveillance officers only for maternal and perinatal deaths which fulfill the standard cased definition.

There is a separate facility data abstraction form for maternal deaths and perinatal deaths.
Data Abstraction CONT . . .

- The data abstraction form for maternal death contains four sections to be completed for all maternal deaths.
- The data abstraction form for perinatal death contains eight parts and to be completed for all perinatal deaths within.
- When both the mother and the neonate are deceased, maternal and perinatal data abstraction form should be completed.
Exercise 1

Coding of Maternal And Perinatal Deaths
Exercise 2: Verbal Autopsy

- Exercise on how to fill the maternal and perinatal death verbal autopsy forms

Verbal Autopsy - Maternal Death
Verbal Autopsy - Perinatal Death
Exercise 3: Facility Based Abstraction:

- Exercise on how to fill the maternal and perinatal death facility based abstraction from by using anonymous clinical cases

Facility Based Abstraction Form - maternal Death
Facility Based Abstraction Form - Perinatal Death
Summary of the Module

- Community Maternal and Perinatal Deaths Investigation Process
  - The Prerequisite for investigation- Suspected case definitions
  - The Investigation process
  - The verbal autopsy forms

- Maternal and Perinatal Deaths Investigation Process In Health Facilities
  - The Prerequisite for investigation- standard case definitions
  - The Investigation process
  - The data abstraction forms