



BuaNews ONLINE

www.buanews.gov.za

Welcome to BuaNews, the gateway to quick and fresh government news and information

[Home](#) | [Today's stories](#) | [This week's stories](#) | [Last week's stories](#) | [Other Features](#) | [International News](#) | [User policy](#)

Compiled by the Government Communication and Information System

Date: 13 May 2010

Title: More pregnant women access antenatal care

By Gabi Khumalo

Pretoria - Ninety seven percent of pregnant mothers have had access to antenatal care during their pregnancies with 71.4 percent receiving antenatal services five times during their pregnancy, a study by the Health Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has found.

The 2008 study, titled "The Health of our Children in South Africa: Results from a national HIV prevalence population survey" found that during labour, the majority of mothers have had access to a trained birth attendant.

Handed over to Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi on Thursday, the study revealed that the majority of children under the age of two were born in a health care facility with nurses or midwives attending to the majority of births.

However, despite good access to health care for pregnant women, maternal mortality remains high.

"We have about 2 500 maternal deaths per year and this suggests that challenges remain with the quality of health care provided.

"The most common causes of deaths were due to hypertension, obstetric hemorrhage, pregnancy related sepsis and pre existing maternal diseases," said HSRC CEO, Dr Olive Shisana, adding that AIDS is the biggest contributor to maternal deaths.

Mixed feeding was also found to be the most common method with only 25.7 percent of babies exclusively breastfed, while 22.5 percent exclusively formula-fed and 51 percent mixed fed during their first six months.

HIV prevalence among 0 to 2 year olds was 2.1 percent, lower than the 3.3 percent average in the age group 0 to 4 years.

Shisana attributed this success to government's Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programme.

"It is encouraging that HIV mothers are going through the PMTCT programme, this pattern could indicate a possible positive impact of the national PMTCT programme in the two years before the study took place.

"During that period, coverage had significantly increased to reach almost three quarters of HIV positive mothers with antiretroviral treatment," she said.

Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi welcomed the report noting that it confirms the department's findings.

Motsoaledi said South Africa is among 10 countries with a high infant mortality rate, adding that while there are protocols in hospitals to save mothers and children, they were not being followed.

"Considering our economy, this should not be happening in our hospitals, there are many poor countries with shortage of human resource but have low maternal deaths," Motsoaledi said.

He said that among the key policy priorities for the health sector for the coming period is increasing the percentage of pregnant women who book for antenatal care before 20 weeks gestation.

"We remain committed to providing high quality antenatal services and are prioritising maternal and child care including monitoring systems that focus on addressing maternal mortality and perinatal deaths," he said. - BuaNews

Search

[Search tips](#)

keywords

and/or

dd/mm/yyyy

date from

to

Search

Reset

[Subscribe](#)

[Comments](#)

[About us](#)

[Contact directories](#)

[Press releases on GOV.ZA](#)



RSS...RSS...RSS.....

What is RSS feed?
[Click here](#) to find out.