

Reproductive Health Research Working Group

The Reproductive Health Research Working Group (RHRWG) was formed in Feb 2000 as part of a capacity building project being implemented by the Population Council with funding from the Packard Foundation. The RHRWG has been conceived as a long-standing working group of research professionals having an expertise in Reproductive Health.

Members of the Group

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expanding scientific knowledge in reproductive health,

- ✍ Work with other agencies and individuals to encourage appropriate choice of research issues, valid priorities for research funding, sound quality of research,
- ✍ Ensure wide dissemination of knowledge to other researchers, policy makers, the reproductive health community and the general public.

Activities

Establishing, and regularly updating, a specific reproductive health agenda for Pakistan.

Providing a forum for technical advice and discussion on proposed and ongoing reproductive health research activities.

Assisting in linking research priorities and institutions with potential donors.

Preparing and disseminating papers on the current state of knowledge in specific area of reproductive health.

Advocating for the appropriate utilization of reproductive health research in designing and implementing reproductive health programs

Acomplishments

- ✍ The Policy Series in Reproductive Health: "A Review of Research on Maternal Health in Pakistan", Report No. 1
- ✍ The Policy Series in Reproductive Health: "An outline of Safe motherhood programs: International and Pakistani Experiences", Report No. 2
- ✍ Workshop on discussing ways of managing the three delays leading to Maternal Mortality and Morbidity
- ✍ Developed proposal for conducting a national study on perinatal and Maternal Mortality
- ✍ Implementation of a small research grants project funded by the Johns Hopkins University

Reproductive Health Research Working Group

Pakistan lags behind most developing countries in women's health. We have a high maternal mortality ratio and a sex ratio that is unfavorable to women.

While poverty and a poorly functioning health system along with the burden of high fertility to a large extent contributes to the poor health status of the people in general, it affects women more adversely because of the low status accorded to them. Women face a number of constraints such as lack of mobility, decision making power, and prohibitions against seeking care. Because of their poor health status the ability of women to contribute positively in the over all development of the country is also largely reduced and furthermore there are huge adverse impacts on families.

Purpose

The purpose of the Reproductive Health Research Working Group is to enhance the knowledge base regarding reproductive health in Pakistan and to ensure that research is inducted into policies pertaining to improving the reproductive health indicators in Pakistan.

More specifically the group has as its objectives the necessity to:

- ✍ Enhance the reproductive health of the people of Pakistan by

Accomplishments

The Policy Series in Reproductive Health

Report No. 1: “A Review of Research on Maternal Health Pakistan”

For a developing country like Pakistan before suggesting new research a systematic synthesis of existing research is exigent in order to ensure relevance, cost effectiveness and avoidance of duplication of past efforts.

During the initial meeting of the group, out of the nine components of the Reproductive Health Package, Safe Motherhood was identified as a high priority area requiring in-depth research. The group decided that before it could develop a safe motherhood agenda it was important to have an idea as to what is and not known about maternal health in Pakistan.

The group commissioned two consultants to look at the overall situation, relating to maternal health in order to provide a sound basis for prioritizing research interests in this area.

The review has been prepared under the supervision of the National Committee on Maternal Health with funding from the Population Council as part of the Packard grant. It is hoped that this information would be utilized by the reproductive health community, policy makers, researchers and the general community.

Report No. 2: “An outline of Safe motherhood programs: International and Pakistani Experiences”

This overview looks at available literature and provides insights into the approaches adopted in the developed as well as developing countries for lowering maternal mortality. The review also includes details of the various interventions introduced by the Government of Pakistan. Experiences of providing refresher training to Traditional Birth Attendants as well as developing a cadre of skilled birth attendants in various South East Asian countries has also been included.

RH Working Group's Meeting on Maternal Health:

Discussing ways of managing the three delays leading to Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

The group invited six organizations working in the area of maternal health to a two-day meeting in July 2000 to discuss and share experiences related to the interventions they are carrying out to address the three delays that contribute to maternal morbidity and mortality. The group shared their overall strategy, methodology for data collection, methods of monitoring and evaluation as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their programs. The organizations received feedback on their working from the group members.

Proposal for National Study on Perinatal and Maternal Mortality

The group prepared a proposal for carrying out the above study. A dialogue has been initiated with policy makers and donors. The group met with policy makers in Karachi in 2003 to emphasize the need for evidence based decision making.

Implementing a small research grant project

The group has been awarded by the John's Hopkins University a project to award and supervise small scale research projects in reproductive health in Pakistan for a period of 03 years commencing in February 2004.

Future Direction

Apart from its mandated activities, based on the technical expertise available within the group, the group has offered its services to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Population Welfare to provide advice in the development of policies, technical guidance and expertise in the design, analysis and application of research carried out within the public sector; Inform and update the policy makers of areas for conducting new research; liaise and assist the government in negotiations with donor agencies; review and comment on planning commission documents.

Reproductive Health Research Working Group

- Establishing a Reproductive Health agenda for Pakistan
- Forum for technical advice
- Linking research priorities with donors
- Preparing and disseminating RH information

for further info

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