Respectful childbirth for all women and newborns

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Women everywhere want respectful care

Number 1 demand globally:
Respectful and dignified care

*What Women Want: Global findings. White Ribbon Alliance. June 2019*
Mistreatment during childbirth is common

Bohren MA, Mehtash H, Fawole B et al. *How women are treated during facility-based childbirth in four countries: a cross-sectional study with labour observations and community-based surveys.* Lancet. 2019
Respectful care is a human right

➢ Engaging women and accounting for their experiences in health systems is the first order of respect in a human rights approach to maternal and newborn care

➢ Women are active and informed individuals with unique expectations and need

➢ Enabling environment for women to speak up and for listening

Good quality care is safe **AND** respectful care

“Respectful maternal and newborn care refers to care that maintains dignity, privacy, confidentiality, ensures freedom from harm and mistreatment, and enables informed choice and continuous support during labour, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period”*

*WHO Recommendations on intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience. 2018
A new era for safe and respectful childbirth

Six WHO recommendations for respectful care:
- Effective communication
- Companionship during labour and birth
- Oral fluid and food intake
- Continuity of care
- Maternal mobility and upright position
- Pain management (pharmacological and non-pharmacological)
Safe and respectful childbirth beyond service delivery: systems and societies

- Challenge harmful gender stereotypes
- Eliminate intersectional discrimination
- Disrupt power dynamics
- Address health system conditions & constraints

Strategies to reduce mistreatment and promote respectful care must account for gender, racial and power dynamics, and should include participatory partnerships with communities.

Thank you!

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