

Maternal Health in a pandemic

Despite the additional challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, partner hospitals continue to develop and deliver top of class care.

Looking back now, it's easy to see that 2020 was a year of endings and closures. Global lockdowns meant an end to all manner of social activities and forced businesses to shutter their doors. Understandably so, health care resources were shifted to support those in most urgent need and new cleanliness protocols were introduced to protect medical staff and non-COVID patients needing care.

Strengthening cleaning regimes during COVID-19

In India, hospitals part of the Utkrisht Project had been receiving support and training on hygiene regimes, improved team-work, and shown innovative approaches to maternal and natal care. Even when faced with the brand-new challenges brought on the pandemic, the teams continued to implement their new knowledge to better serve rural moms and their new babies.

Kalpavriksha Hospital and Research Centre Foundation located in Jhunjhunu (Pilani) is one member hospital who shined. The nursing staff in this hospital continued to play a vital role in providing maternity services despite the pandemic. Nursing staff are trained on Manyata standards, which includes dealing with emergencies.

Additionally, they were trained and mentored on infection prevention practices to be followed while attending to patients. Kalpavriksha nurses report that the continued support of onsite and online trainings has motivated them to continue providing maternal and natal care with the strictest hygiene precautions, not only to protect the lives of the mothers and babies but also their own.

During the pandemic, Kalpavriksha Hospital admitted a patient who was three-months pregnant. She arrived as an emergency and was admitted with fatigue and hypotension, later to be diagnosed as an ectopic pregnancy. Nursing staff provided her with basic essential care and stabilized her before she was shifted to OT for further management. A rapid infusion of crystalloid solutions was started, and nurses catharized the patient while continuously monitoring vitals to assess the effects of the interventions. Later, participant nurses stated that the team approach taught them by the HLPPT team helped to manage the patient in an efficient manner, avoiding panic. One of the nursing staff noted, "...With the help of training we learnt how not to [...] panic in any emergency situation and most importantly the teamwork. We thank team HLPPT for making us more confident and motivating to do our best we can"

A focus on improvement

The Kalpavriksha Hospital team was able to make these improvements with the help of their partner organizations, Population Services International (PSI) and HLPPT (Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust). Thanks to an innovative collaboration between public and private organizations, the Maternal and Newborn Health development impact bond (DIB) was launched in 2018 to enable education and improvement efforts for maternal and newborn health in India.

¹ Mayo clinic prenatal visit recommendations, available here <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/prenatal-care/art-20044882>

² Trends in Telehealth adoption, available here <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6943a3.html>



Financing for the Utkrisht Project comes, in large part, from the contributions of UBS clients and staff. The UBS Optimus Foundation acts, in this case, as the risk investor. Working in the format of a development impact bond allows organizations to, if successful, recover capital from the initial contribution and continue funding the programs from the returns, if pre-determined health outcomes are met.

The implementation manager, Palladium, designed the impact bond and manages the implementation of the program throughout the three-years. Delivery of the change programs at the local level is managed by a carefully selected group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In this case, PSI, and HLPPT The outcomes of facilities participating in the DIB program are independently verified by sector specialist Mathematica, ensuring the maximum impact is achieved for the investment provided. UBS Optimus Foundation, however, retains a firm grip on the stewardship and distribution of funding throughout.



These materials have been prepared by UBS AG and/or a subsidiary and/or an affiliate thereof ("UBS").

These materials are for distribution only under such circumstances as may be permitted by applicable law. They have not been prepared with regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation or particular needs of any specific recipient. They are published solely for informational purposes and are not to be construed as a solicitation or an offer to buy or sell any securities or related financial instruments or to participate in any particular trading strategy. The recipient should not construe the contents of these materials as legal, tax, accounting, regulatory, or other specialist or technical advice or services or investment advice or a personal recommendation. No representation or warranty, either express or implied, is provided in relation to the accuracy, completeness or reliability of the information contained herein except with respect to information concerning UBS, nor is it intended to be a complete statement or summary of the securities markets or developments referred to in these materials or a guarantee that the services described herein comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. They should not be regarded by recipients as a substitute for the exercise of their own judgment. Any opinions expressed in these materials are subject to change without notice and may differ or be contrary to opinions expressed by other business areas or groups of UBS as a result of using different assumptions and criteria. UBS is under no obligation to update or keep current the information contained herein, and past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results. Neither UBS nor any of its directors, officers, employees or agents accepts any liability for any loss or damage arising out of the use of all or any part of these materials or reliance upon the information contained herein. Additional information may be made available upon request. Not all products or services described herein are available in all jurisdictions and clients wishing to effect transactions should contact their local sales representative for further information and availability.

UBS Evidence Lab is a separate department to UBS Global Research and UBS Evidence Lab and is not subject to any of the independence disclosure standards applicable to material prepared by UBS Research. UBS Evidence Lab provides data and evidence for analysis and use by UBS Evidence Lab clients including UBS Research and does not provide research, investment recommendations or advice.

UBS specifically prohibits the redistribution or reproduction of these materials in whole or in part without the written permission of UBS and UBS accepts no liability whatsoever for the actions of third parties in this respect. © UBS 2021. The key symbol and UBS are among the registered and unregistered trademarks of UBS. All rights reserved.

