Global Health in Unintended Pregnancy and Prevention Care
Definitions

**Cairo Convention:** In Reproductive Health and Family Planning the Cairo Convention (1994) urged governments to provide universal access to family planning information and services and to decrease unsafe abortion. In Gender Equality and Empowerment, the Convention stated that human development cannot be sustained unless women are guaranteed equal rights and equal status with men. Full access to education is the single most important element to equality and empowerment of women. All legal, social and cultural barriers that discriminate against women and prevent women’s full participation in society, including in public and political life must be removed.

**United Nations Millennium Development Goals for 2015:** In 2000, 189 nations made a promise to free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations. This pledge turned into the eight Millennium Development aimed at eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.

**Heading-Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030):** These goals build on the Millennium Development Goals with an agenda of 17 goals for 2016-2030. The goals address the needs of people in both developed and developing countries, emphasizing that no one should be left behind. Broad and ambitious in scope, the Agenda addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental, as well as important aspects related to peace, justice and effective institutions.

**Maternal Morbidity:** According to the CDC maternal morbidity includes physical and psychological conditions that result from or are aggravated by pregnancy and have an adverse effect on a woman’s health. Maternal morbidity (MM) is difficult to measure because the definition of MM differs among countries and researchers, the criteria to diagnose diseases can vary, and surveys estimating the prevalence of MM are difficult to conduct in some countries.

**Maternal Mortality:** According to the World Health Organization, maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to, or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes. The maternal mortality ratio (per 100 000 live births) represents the risk associated with each pregnancy and is a Millennium Development Goal indicator.
Orienting Facts

- Unsafe abortion is a major public health concern and a social justice issue. On a global scale, unsafe abortion is an important determinant of women’s reproductive mortality and morbidity. Unsafe abortions are the third largest cause of maternal mortality worldwide.

- **Unsafe Abortion in 2008: Global and Regional Levels and Trends** reports that 43.8 million abortions were performed worldwide, representing the termination of one fifth of all pregnancies. The WHO estimates that in 2008, 21.6 million unsafe abortions took place globally, leading to the deaths of 47,000 women and disabilities for an additional 5 million.

- According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) the main causes of death for adolescent girls in most developing countries are complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Adolescent girls under the age of 15 are most at risk of dying from pregnancy-related conditions.

- Raymond (2014) states that abortion is safe and has lower morbidity and mortality than childbirth when carried out by trained practitioners in sanitary conditions, but, according to the WHO, nearly half of the abortions done in the world are unsafe.

- Some of the world's most restrictive abortion laws exist in Latin America: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile, Honduras and the Dominican Republic ban abortion completely, even when a woman’s life is in danger.

**Kassenbaum et al. (2014)** identify maternal mortality rates in 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Maternal Mortality Rate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>3.3 deaths per 100,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>18.5 deaths per 100,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>65.8 deaths per 100,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>174.1 deaths per 100,000 live births</td>
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</tbody>
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- According to the CDC, there are racial disparities in pregnancy-related mortality in the U.S. in 2011:
  - 12.5 deaths per 100,000 live births for white women.
  - 17.3 deaths per 100,000 live births for women of other races.
  - 42.8 deaths per 100,000 live births for black women.

- According to Finer and Zolna (2014) half of pregnancies among American women are unintended, and four in 10 of these are terminated by abortion.

- The Guttmacher Institute reports that “the average American woman spends about five years pregnant, postpartum or trying to become pregnant, and three decades—more than three-quarters of her reproductive life—trying to avoid an unintended pregnancy.” Guttmacher’s Fact Sheet on *Induced Abortion in...*
the United States indicates the likelihood of having an abortion rises over the course of a lifetime: 1 in 10 women will have an abortion by age 20, and 1 in 3 will have an abortion by age 45.

- The Guttmacher Institute also reports that births resulting from unintended or closely spaced pregnancies are associated with adverse maternal and child health outcomes such as delayed prenatal care, premature birth and negative physical and mental health effects for children.

References

