

Technical Advisory Meeting of the Mother and Newborn Information for Tracking Outcomes and Results (MONITOR) Group

**Meeting Report
26-28 November 2018**

Geneva



Executive Summary

The Mother and Newborn Information for Tracking Outcomes and Results (MoNITOR) Technical Advisory Group held its fourth meeting on 26-28 November 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. This advisory group to WHO is tasked with providing clear, independent, harmonised, and strategic advice for global and country teams engaged in maternal and newborn measurement and accountability.

Objectives of the meeting

- To review new evidence and metrics work for maternal and newborn health;
- To review ongoing MoNITOR work, including development of indicator reference sheets, synthesis of indicator validation work, development of a maternal and newborn framework;
- To discuss dissemination of new findings and documents.

Expected outcomes of the meeting

- To develop a workplan for the final year of the grant, including next steps on current work;
- Other areas of work identified.

Presentations

The first day consisted of a variety of presentations to update the group on different groups work on maternal and newborn health measurement, including from the Improving Maternal Health Measurement for Capacity and Use, an update on emergency obstetric care indicators, and ongoing studies with the INDEPTH network. In addition, Lenka Benova updated the group on the scoping review on validation of maternal and newborn indicators and the updated indicator mapping conducted by Holly Newby.

Postnatal care indicators

During the second day, a variety of presentations were given on the topic of measurement and monitoring of postnatal care: on the plans for updating the WHO postnatal care guidelines; on an update on postnatal care measurement; as well as learnings from validation studies of postnatal care indicators.

A group exercise was conducted, in which participants discussed postnatal care either from the perspective of coverage, or from the perspective of content, respectively.

Recommendations from group exercise on postnatal care coverage:

The group suggests rephrasing the measurement, from measuring the percent of women/newborn receiving at least one PNC visit, to capturing the percentage of women/newborn receiving the recommended *minimum PNC coverage*, which would be defined differently depending on whether there is a birth in a facility, or at home. For home births, it was recommended that PNC within two days should be captured, while for facility births, the recommendation would be to cover both a pre-discharge check as well as a post-discharge check within the first two days.

A ladder approach, similar to what is applied to some WASH indicators, may be used. If possible, it would be beneficial to capture the distribution of pre-discharge checks and reported time of discharge. It was also suggested that content should be captured within these indicators, at post discharge and/or discharge.

Recommendations to the DHS revision

The afternoon of the second day of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the revision of the DHS core questionnaire and how the MoNITOR Group can contribute to this process.

Gulnara Semenov, DHS, gave a presentation of the process of the DHS revision; as well as an overview of the questions in the core module and the two optional modules on maternal care and newborn care.

Tanya Marchant, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, presented learnings obtained by the Improving Coverage Measurement Group, from validation studies of questions currently used in DHS. The purpose of the presentation was to discuss how these learnings may be useful for the MoNITOR Group in the process of drafting recommendations for the DHS revision.

Melinda Munos, Johns Hopkins University, and Jennifer Requejo, UNICEF, presented the DHS newborn sub-group, whose aim is to develop timely, robust recommendations to update content of the DHS-8 related to newborn health. A discussion was initiated on how this group may coordinate with the MoNITOR Group in the process of submitting recommendations to DHS.

External observers to the MoNITOR meeting conducted a group exercise, reviewing the maternal and newborn health constructs/indicators currently captured in DHS; as well as reviewing a list of interventions and discussing whether they should be included in DHS. The group presented an initial proposal of indicators to keep, modify, exclude or transition from an optional to the core DHS module which was discussed with the MoNITOR Group. There are two groups working to finalize recommendations for DHS – one for newborn led by UNICEF and ICM and one for maternal led by MCSP. Those recommendations will be discussed at meetings planned for January 22-24, which will then be shared with MoNITOR. A webinar will be scheduled to discuss, and MoNITOR will submit the final recommendations to DHS on behalf on the maternal and newborn measurement community.

The final recommendations to DHS will be shared with MICS; the International Family Health Survey in India (conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences); as well as potentially other national surveys.

Action items:

WHO will:

- Work with existing groups to finalize a set of recommendations and schedule a webinar with MoNITOR Technical Advisory Group in February to finalise.
- Submit the recommendations to DHS on behalf of MoNITOR

Indicator mapping

After the previous MoNITOR meeting in May 2018, it was suggested that the use of the indicator mapping may be expanded, with the indicator mapping not solely being an internal working tool, but also laying the foundation for the planned indicator prioritisation tool.

Since the previous MoNITOR Technical Advisory Meeting, Holly Newby, consultant, WHO, has reviewed four different documents that were released after the meeting, and compared them against the existing mapping. A total of 174 indicators identified, of which 15 were new indicators, and 30 had already been included in the original mapping, however, with a different formulation (definition, numerator and/or denominator).

Action items

- Finalise the second version of the indicator database (spreadsheet), by “cleaning up” after the second round of additions.
- Add the new indicators from the second round of mapping to the visualisation of the indicator mapping.

Indicator reference sheets

15 indicator reference sheets have been completed so far, however, there will be a need of a complete copy/edit review from an external party to ensure consistency.

Action items

- WHO to complete the drafts before the next MoNITOR Technical Advisory Meeting in April 2019. The Advisory Group to potentially review drafts during this process.
- WHO to plan two days prior to the next MoNITOR Technical Advisory Meeting in April 2019, dedicated for the Advisory Group to review the drafts and finalise the sheets.

Indicator validation

Update on research and papers on validation

Lenka Benova, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, gave an update on the two papers that are in process, based on the indicator work previously presented. She also presented a separate piece of research that has been conducted by Radovich et. al at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, comprising a scoping review on validation studies on the specific indicator of skilled birth attendant. Participants of the MoNITOR meeting were encouraged to inform of any additional validation studies on skilled birth attendant that they may be aware of.

Development of a guidance document related to indicator validation

Allisyn Moran, MCA, WHO; and Ann-Beth Moller, RHR, WHO, presented the plan to develop a guidance document related to indicator validation, with the working title “Guidance on Indicator Validation for Monitoring Maternal and Newborn Health”. The draft concept note for this project outlines the purpose of this guidance as follows: “to provide guidance on how to define, develop, analyse and interpret validation studies for maternal and newborn indicators at multiple levels”. The intent is for the document to be used in the process of determining whether an indicator may be recommended in the indicator prioritisation tool, which is another product that the MoNITOR Group aims to develop.

The participants of the meeting discussed the title, scope and intended audience of the guidance. It was agreed that the scope of questions and the audience need to be well-defined before a suitable title can be finalised.

An Advisory Group will be convened. Claudia Hanson, Alison Morgan and Lara Vaz from the MoNITOR Advisory Group expressed interest in joining this new group.

Action items

The MoNITOR Advisory Group is encouraged to:

- Submit suggestions on potential members of the Advisory Group, including experts on country level, e.g. country level researchers, in order to include the user perspective.
- Submit suggestions on suitable candidates for the consultancy position.

Moller and Moran are to:

- Develop a process for the project;
- Draft a ToR for a consultant to lead this project;

An update on this work will be presented during the next MoNITOR Technical Advisory Meeting.

Maternal and newborn indicator prioritisation tool

It has previously been decided that MoNITOR will develop a user-friendly tool to facilitate prioritisation and use of indicators at country level. The first step is to establish a list of filters that should lay the basis for the prioritisations. The Advisory Group agreed on filters, indicators and output to be included in a first version of the tool.

Regional capacity building workshops

The MoNITOR Advisory Group agreed that presence at regional workshop(s) would constitute a good opportunity to disseminate MoNITOR products, including the indicator prioritisation tool. It was concluded that the group will link to existing capacity building workshop(s), rather than creating an entirely new workshop. A number of different, potential meetings were discussed, including the Countdown series of capacity building workshops and Women Deliver.

Action items

- Moller and Moran to further explore and decide on suitable workshop(s).

Research agenda

The MoNITOR Advisory Group suggested the following topics to be raised on the research agenda:

- Advocacy for strengthening the quality of HMIS data: a commentary on the importance of HMIS.
- Assessment of whether data from HMIS matches data from household surveys.

Through the process of reviewing the indicator mapping and identifying indicators valid for recommendation, the MoNITOR Advisory Group may also be able to articulate a research agenda with regards to indicators and/or validation.

Next Technical Advisory Meeting of the MoNITOR Group

The next meeting is planned to take place during the week commencing 29 April 2019. It is suggested that the first two days of this week will be dedicated to a session for the Advisory Group to finalise the indicator reference sheets.