Intra-urban inequalities in Maternal knowledge, attitudes and practices in Kathmandu, Nepal

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Despite the different methodologies used by different organisations to estimate the rate of maternal mortality (MMR), Nepal continues to report one of the highest MMR in the world. The most widely reported figures are the un-adjusted 2006 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) and the 2005 World Health Organisation data, which stand at 281 and 830 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, respectively (Save the children 2010). Globally, the average MMR is estimated to be 400 per 100,000 live births (Hogan et al. 2010).

According to the 2006 NDHS figures, Nepal is “on track” to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, an estimated one third of Kathmandu’s population live in slum areas, and health data for this vulnerable population group is scarce and under-reported (Hellen Keller International 2010). This means that accurate data on their health status, in particular women and children, is lacking (Hellen Keller International 2010).

This study reports the findings of a maternal-health Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) baseline survey carried out in one of the biggest slum areas of Kathmandu, Nepal. The findings suggest that although women living in slum areas possess better maternal health knowledge than that of non-slum women, barriers prevent slum women from successfully adopting positive maternal health care practices.