The Lancet Maternal Health Series
Sharing the Series, reaching new audiences

The Lancet Maternal Health Series, published in September 2016, synthesises the last decade of evidence on maternal health worldwide, and champions vital action on the path to 2030.

To create strong engagement and advocacy for evidence-informed maternal health improvement, we designed a comprehensive communications strategy to accompany the Series. Communications activities engaged a variety of audiences in maternal health issues globally and nationally, reaching governments, public health and medical communities, donors, implementers, civil society actors and the general public.

Communications activities sought to:

- Communicate The Lancet Maternal Health Series to a broad audience of stakeholders to inform, engage and inspire action based on the latest evidence;
- Amplify the key messages of the Series to promote change in policy and practice to improve maternal health globally;
- Engage influential institutions in the global health and development arena to maximize the reach of the findings; encourage conversations about maternal, newborn and global health, equity and women’s rights; and
- Ensure maternal health retains its focus as a key priority in the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) era.

Launches

Global launch

The global launch of the Series was on 18 September 2016 in New York City, as part of the events hosted by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (PMNCH) to coincide with the UN General Assembly. Approximately 180 delegates from academia, governments, and civil society from high-, middle- and low-income countries attended to hear Series Principal Investigator Professor Oona Campbell present the Series, followed by an invigorating panel discussion with Dr Mariam Claeson (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, now Global Financing Facility), Dr Barbara Kerstiëns (European Commission), Dr John Lawrence (Médecins Sans Frontières), George Nkhoma (Chitipa District Hospital, Malawi & White Ribbon Alliance), and Dr Ariel Pablos-Méndez (USAID).

Speakers discussed the current maternal health situation and the opportunities to lower mortality and morbidity to reach SDG targets. There was strong recognition that maternal health efforts need to be part of a continuum of care that includes family planning and newborn health.

The event was opened by Professor Peter Piot (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) and the Honourable Minister of Health of Nigeria, Professor Isaac Folorunso Adewole, delivered invited comments on the Series. Authors Professor Suellen Miller (University of California, San Francisco), Professor Dorothy Shaw (BC Women’s Hospital), and Dr Fernando Althabe (Institute of Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy) joined Professor Campbell and Richard Horton (The Lancet) for an audience question and answer session.
Regional Launches

In addition to global and institutional launches, two regional launches, in Africa and Asia, cemented the Series’ focus on low- and middle-incomes countries and reached new audiences.

Nigeria

The Africa regional launch was held in Abuja, Nigeria, as part of the official program of the 4th Nigeria Family Planning Conference on 7-8 November 2016. The Honourable Minister of Health, Professor Isaac Folorunso Adewole, officially launched the Series. The ceremony was attended by Nigerian dignitaries and all 550 conference attendees, representing Nigeria’s civil society, NGOs, academia, research, government and international donors.

Dr Clara Calvert and Professor Oona Campbell presented the Series and encouraged leaders in Nigeria to use the data and recommendations to inform national programs and policies. Following the presentation there was a panel discussion on the Series with Professor Brian D. Adinma (Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics of Nigeria), Professor Oona Campbell (LSHTM), Dr Mairo Mandara (BMGF), Allisyn Moran (USAID, now WHO), Toyin Saraki (The Wellbeing Foundation), Dr Tunde Segun, (MamaYe-Evidence for Action), and Dr Kole A. Shettima (MacArthur Foundation).

Over 600 copies of The Lancet Maternal Health Series Report and Executive Summary were distributed to attendees.

India

The Asia regional launch was a focal point of the Human Rights in Childbirth conference in Mumbai, India, on 2-3 February 2017, where the Series’ themes of respect and dignity, and finding the balance in maternity care, resonated with a local and international audience of midwives, maternal health advocates, and researchers.

Series authors Professor Suellen Miller and Dr Clara Calvert and commentary author Professor Lynn Freedman presented the Series and led panels on the extremes of ‘too little, too late’ and ‘too much, too soon’ in maternity care. Series author Dr Neel Shah presented on the panel “Organizing healthcare for improving quality and respect,” and was an active and vocal delegate, writing an article for The Conversation about the lessons from the conference, the Series, and the struggle in maternal health care to “find the appropriate balance.”

More than 150 participants representing WHO, UNFPA, White Ribbon Alliance, International Congress of Midwives, the Federation of Obstetric & Gynaecological Societies of India, Centre for Reproductive Rights, Human Rights Law Network, researchers, economists, doctors, midwives and reporters discussed the global landscape and, more specifically, India’s own challenges and opportunities.

China

The China launch, in collaboration with the China Maternal & Child Health Association (CMCHA) and UNICEF China, will take place in Hainan on 23-24 November 2017. Professors Oona Campbell and Carine Ronsmans will present key messages from the Series to over 3,000 maternal and child health professionals and senior government representatives attending the CMCHA Annual Meeting. The full Series Report in Mandarin Chinese will be available on the Series website once launched.
London launch

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) hosted the London launch on 11 October 2016 to a capacity crowd of 260, with an additional 100 or more online viewers. The opening remarks were delivered by Professor Anne Mills, Deputy Director and Provost of LSHTM. Dr Susannah Woodd and Dr Clara Calvert presented the Series. The event focused on the next generation of maternal health researchers, featuring a panel discussion facilitated by Dr Anthony Costello, Director of the WHO Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child & Adolescent Health, with Giorgia Gon, Dr Ipek Gurol, and Dr Gaurav Sharma discussing new opportunities in maternal health research. Dr Jocalyn Clark from The Lancet gave the closing remarks, praising everyone involved with the publication of the Series, and delivering a resounding call to action for a research agenda that mobilises political will to address the vast disparities and gender discrimination that are the root causes of poor maternal health care.

Satellite events

Series authors and key advocacy partners took the opportunity to host their own launch events, with 13 satellite events in four countries on four continents held to share the Series’ insights. Events were held at academic institutions (University of California San Francisco, Karolinska Institute), policy think tanks (Center for Strategic and International Studies), peak public health and medical bodies (the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the American Public Health Association), and to implementers and donors in the health and development fields.

Executive Summaries

To coincide with the launch of the Series we published an executive summary in English, French and Spanish, concisely summarising the themes and key findings of the Series and setting out the call to action. More than 3,300 executive summaries were distributed at launch events, with further dissemination occurring in electronic formats via the Series website and social media. This accessible entry point to the Series is currently available in French and Spanish.

Satellite event highlights

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event &amp; location</th>
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<tr>
<td>19 Sept 2016</td>
<td>USAID agency presentation Washington D.C., USA</td>
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<td>20 Oct 2016</td>
<td>Canadian Launch Ottawa, Canada Organised by The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)/Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Oct 2016</td>
<td>American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting: “Evidence and action on women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health” Denver, USA Organised by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), WHO</td>
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Videos and case studies

We produced eight videos and six case studies featuring women and midwives from India, Nigeria, and Sweden sharing their experiences of childbirth, from the interviews and video recordings of the photo commission. They bring to life and contextualise Series themes, including over-intervention, respect and dignity in maternity care, and barriers to accessing care. Giving a platform to the voices of women grappling with the daily reality of maternal health challenges and constraints was an important element of the Series communications, and served to provide a real world link to the research of the Series.

www.maternalhealthseries.org/watch

Infographics

Two infographics were produced to distil the technical evidence of the Series and bring the key findings and messages of the Series to a broader audience. By presenting the evidence of the Series in a concise and visual way, the infographics are accessible and easy to share online, providing another entry point to the Series.

Storify

We produced Storify reports of each of the launch events, to capture the social media coverage, engagement and reflections of the audiences at events. By curating social media content across multiple platforms, the Storify reports present online audience perspectives. These snapshots will be shared on the Series website and social media, delivering additional visual content about the Series, and reporting the launch events in a succinct and accessible manner.
Media coverage

Social media toolkit and impact statistics

A [social media toolkit](#) was produced and distributed to key advocacy partners ahead of the Series publication. The toolkit included key messages; information about authors, global launch panellists, and their institutions; the Series hashtag #MaternalHealthNow; sample tweets and Facebook posts; and social media tiles (images with text) for partners to share on Twitter and Facebook.

Active tweeting from both the global and London launches accounting for the Series hashtag #MaternalHealthNow trending on Twitter on those days. Many key influencers participated in the conversation on Twitter and Facebook, including: Save the Children, USAID Global Health, The Lancet, the Guardian Global Development Professionals Network, Women Deliver, PMNCH, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, MacArthur Foundation, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, and Concern Worldwide.

Social media cards included in the Series social media toolkit were used by six partner organisations, with the majority of posts occurring on Twitter. The sample social media posts were published 319 times. The Series hashtag #MaternalHealthNow was included in 5,521 posts between 13 September 2016 and 28 February 2017. Following the launch of *The Lancet* Maternal Health Series, the online conversation about maternal health increased by 13 percent.

Press coverage

*The Lancet* Maternal Health Series featured in more than 56 unique news stories across 113 print and online news outlets in the six months following publication. The tone was overwhelmingly positive and informative.

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<tr>
<th>Notable articles</th>
<th>Maternal deaths worldwide drop by half, yet shocking disparities remain</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lethal Gaps in Maternal Care: Q&amp;A with Wendy Graham</strong></td>
<td>The Guardian, 15 September 2016</td>
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<td><strong>When the miracle of childbirth turns to life and death</strong></td>
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<td>LSHTM feature article, 2 December 2016</td>
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<td><a href="http://features.lshtm.ac.uk/project/miracle-childbirth-turns-life-death">http://features.lshtm.ac.uk/project/miracle-childbirth-turns-life-death</a></td>
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<td><strong>Poorest and most marginalized women continue to be most at risk of maternal death</strong></td>
<td>WHO, 15 September 2016</td>
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<td><strong>‘I’m outraged’: The world has made slow progress in saving mothers’ lives</strong></td>
<td>The Toronto Star, 16 September 2016</td>
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Looking forward

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Building on and extending the reach of the Series, we designed a MOOC to bring the wealth of learning in the Series to the next generation of maternal health researchers globally. *The Lancet Maternal Health Series: Global Research & Evidence* will start on 23 October 2017 and is now open for enrolment. Rooted in the six papers of the Series, the free three-week course will highlight key insights of the Series in a learning format, with additional insights and contextualisation of the Series key messages. The course will run periodically with all materials openly available, forming a sustainable legacy of the Series. To ensure global reach and engagement with the Series, the course will be translated into Chinese, and launched to coincide with the China launch in November 2017.

Getting involved

- Share the messages of the Series online and with your networks, using the Series hashtag #MaternalHealthNow
- Visit the Series website
- Talk about the Series – write, tweet, blog
- Read the Series
- Encourage your networks to register for the MOOC and share it worldwide
- Read the *Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents Health*
- Advocate that your organisation and government make and keep promises to support the Strategy and its initiatives
- Encourage & participate in further maternal health research

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