



PTBi Principal Investigator Prof. Peter Waiswa speaks to a mother of a preterm at Jinja Regional Referral Hospital

Background:

The 85000 deaths (39,000 newborn; 40,000 stillbirths; 6000 maternal) every year around the time of birth continues to present a sombre atmosphere for Ugandan families and a challenge for the country. For the newborn period, preterm birth complications are the leading contributors to newborn deaths in Uganda. Out of an estimated 1,665,000 annual births, 226,000 are preterm with 12,500 of them directly contributing to child mortality.

Makerere University School of Public Health has received a 4 year (2015-2019) sub-award from the University of California San Francisco - Preterm Birth Initiative (PTBi) East Africa, which is an initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation working to reduce the burden of prematurity. Working in selected sites in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, PTBi-East Africa aims to reduce morbidity and mortality from preterm birth by strengthening facility-based care from pregnancy through labour, delivery, and immediate postnatal period.

In Uganda, the overall goal is to reduce neonatal mortality and morbidity due to prematurity in the four major public and two private not for profit hospitals in Busoga sub-region. Our objective is to determine if a package of facility-based interventions will decrease morbidity and mortality among preterm births across the six hospitals. None-the-less, Busoga with a population of 3 million people covers ten districts including Jinja, Kamuli, Iganga, Bugiri, Mayuge and Kaliro. Others are Luuka, Namayingo, Namutumba and Buyende.

Monthly average deliveries and preterm births at the six hospitals

Facility	Deliveries	Preterm Births
Jinja Regional Referral Hospital	556	60
Iganga General Hospital	557	25
Bugiri General Hospital	313	15
Kamuli General Hospital	214	11
Kamuli Mission Hospital	153	18
St. Francis Buluba Mission Hospital	75	7
Total	1868	136

Our Supposition

We hypothesize that support of combined evidence-based strategies

- Strengthening data collection and data use activities;
- Implementation of a modified WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist with an emphasis on preterm labour and preterm babies;
- Simulation-based provider training(Pronto) and mentoring on key existing evidence-based practices to improve newborn outcomes;
- Support of quality improvement (QI) cycles to identify and resolve facility-specific problems and bottlenecks will lead to improvements in health service provision for preterm infants, and reduction in mortality and morbidity for preterms.



Dr Harriet Nambuya (left) takes midwives through a gestational age measurement skills update session



Mother doing KMC at Iganga Hospital

We use evidence-informed interventions where they exist and test novel approaches that are carefully adapted to the local context, and planned and implemented with local stakeholders. Rigorous measurement and evaluation enables us to understand what works and why. Our approach is grounded in a commitment to capacity building and long-term sustainability.

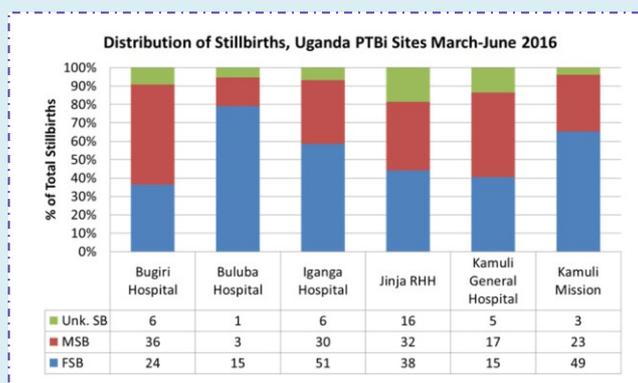
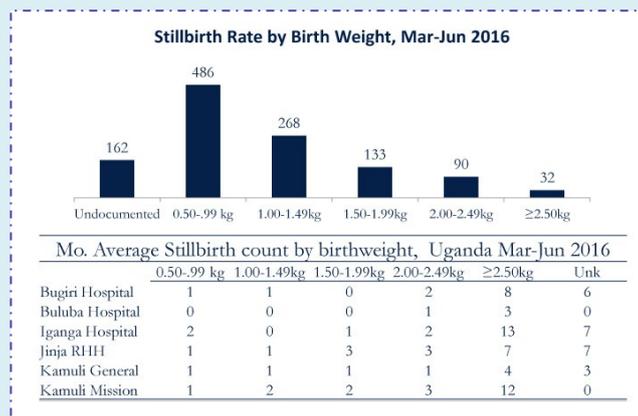
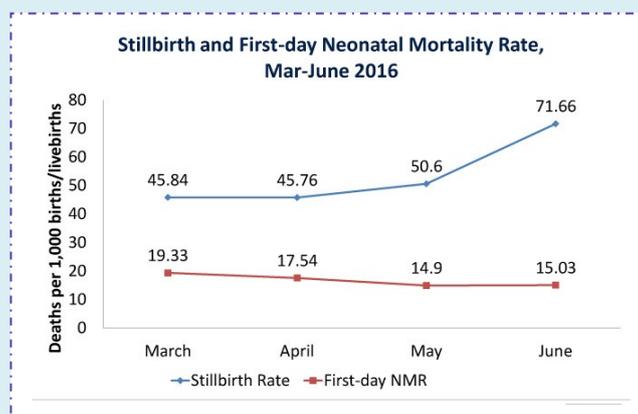
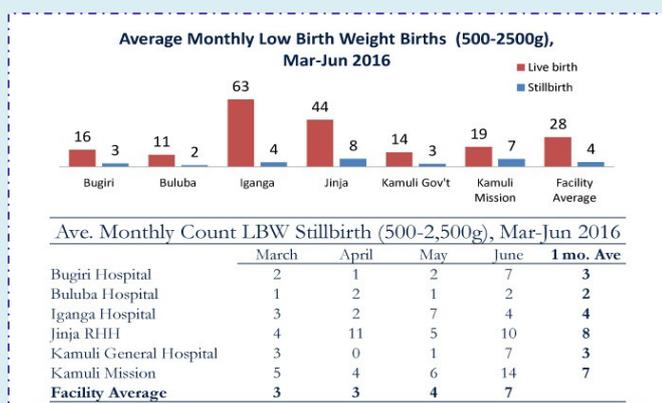
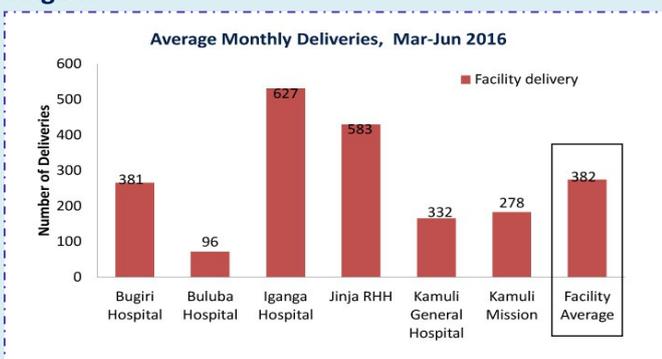
Our Belief

This project has the potential to provide feasible, effective intervention strategies that can be locally-adapted to save the lives of preterm babies, as well as reduce complications associated with prematurity. Facilities involved will be the first beneficiaries of lessons learnt, but we hope that the same approach can be rolled out to other settings within Uganda and beyond.

Study Progress in Uganda

In the first quarter of 2016, a baseline facility assessment was carried out to assess data quality and facility readiness to handle preterm birth. The assessment also aimed at documenting current care practices, triaging systems, data collection and usage in the 6 facilities. Data strengthening activities have been done while data collection is ongoing. An abridged version of the WHO's Safe Childbirth Checklist has been rolled out while quality improvement mentors have also been trained.

Current Data Highlights from Six Hospitals in Busoga Region



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