

Safe Motherhood in Latin America: An Unfinished Agenda

June 4, 2003, Washington, DC - Every day 1,600 women die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth; 95 percent of these deaths are preventable. This figure masks disparities, particularly in the Latin America and Caribbean region, where maternal mortality differs greatly between and within countries, subregions and population groups. Safe Motherhood initiatives work to ensure that all women worldwide receive the care they need to be safe and healthy before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth. This presentation highlighted two research projects in Mexico that focused on certain components of Safe Motherhood. Continued research, improved service delivery and expanded policy and funding commitments are all essential to reducing maternal mortality and improving women's and children's lives.

Introduction:

Kathleen Deutsch, Program Chair, Zonta Club of Washington, DC

Speaker:

Ana Langer, M.D., Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, The Population Council

See Dr. Langer's presentation on Presentations web page.

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Quick Facts:

"Every day at least 1,600 women die from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Ninety-nine percent of these deaths occur in the developing world. Ninety-five percent of these deaths are preventable."

Ana Langer, M.D., Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, The Population Council

"Maternal mortality is higher for non-whites than for whites in the U.S. The pregnancy-related mortality ratio is much higher for blacks (29.6) and higher for Hispanics (10.3), compared to whites (8.1)."

Ana Langer, M.D., Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, The Population Council

"The gap between maternal mortality in developing and developed countries has increased over time. Maternal mortality in Latin America and the Caribbean was 8.6 times higher than in Canada from 1970-75, and 15 times higher from 1985-1989."

Ana Langer, M.D., Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, The Population Council

"Obstetric care in Mexico has improved over time, but some disparities still exist between urban and rural areas. Over 90 percent of all women received prenatal care in 1997, 96.3 percent of urban women and 85 percent of rural women. The gap between urban and rural women is much larger for childbirth. In 1997, 91 percent of urban women delivered in an institutional setting, compared to only 59 percent of rural women."

Ana Langer, M.D., Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, The Population Council

In Attendance:

40 members of the Zonta Club of Washington, DC and their guests