

Chlorhexidine for Umbilical Cord Care: A new, low-cost intervention to reduce newborn mortality.

Chlorhexidine (CHX) is a broad spectrum antiseptic gel used on newborn's umbilical cord to prevent life threatening infections. It is safe and effective for reducing bacterial colonization in skin and umbilical stump of newborns.

The freshly cut umbilical cord is a common entry point for invasive bacteria that cause newborn sepsis and death. Bacteria rapidly colonize in the moist cord stump and have direct access to the bloodstream through umbilical vessels that remain open for the first few days after birth.

It is highly recommended to use CHX 7.1% in neonates' umbilical cord stump during the first week of their life. It prevents neonates from bacterial infections for a long period of time (24-48 hours). ASMO launched the product in June 2020 in the private market in Afghanistan.



Ensuring steady supply of FP & MCH products in Afghanistan despite COVID-19 outbreak and lockdowns

Lockdowns and curfews imposed to curb the Coronavirus' spread have put millions of women globally out of reach of birth control methods and other priority health products. Confined to their homes, the couples today face threat of unwanted pregnancies. The problem gets significantly compounded in Afghanistan where supply of 100% of modern contraceptives and nearly 90% of health commodities rely on imports. The country is extremely prone to shortage of medicine including contraceptives especially in emergency situations like now. With an unmet need of 25% for family planning and total fertility rate of 5.3, impaired access to FP and health commodities further deteriorate Afghan women's health and wellbeing.

Afghan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) is committed to increase access to and demand for priority health products in FP and MCH nationwide. ASMO's team of sales and supply chain experts continue to supply contraceptives to private pharmaceutical wholesalers and retailers across the country predominantly in five major urban provinces of Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Kandahar and Nangarhar despite the steady increase in the confirmed cases of coronavirus in the country and imposition of lockdown and curfew within those cities.

Appropriately trained and closely monitored by ASMO's senior management team, the sales executives are out on the road, equipped with protective clothes, masks, gloves and hand sanitizers. With support from the supply chain team they have been maintaining regular contacts with pharmaceutical outlets, taking orders using phones and online customer app and supplying orders on a priority basis to ensure that contraceptives are readily available to FP methods users and intenders to space childbirth.

As the leading private sector provider of contraceptives and health products in Afghanistan, ASMO remains firmly committed to serve the underserved in Afghanistan even under very critical situation.



Where women go for contraception and why it matters: findings from 36 countries

Understanding where women obtain family planning methods and how sources vary across user groups is essential to improve contraceptive access and ensure an equitable and sustainable future. Such information is essential for government stakeholders, program implementers, and donors to improve contraceptive access, equity, and choice. SHOPS Plus analyzed Demographic and Health Survey data from all USAID Population and Reproductive Health and Family Planning 2020 focus countries with a survey since 2012 to examine contraceptive sources and how sources varied by method, geography, age, marital status, and socioeconomic status. The analysis included 36 low- and middle-income countries. Potential implications were related to contraceptive equity, sustainability, method choice, and policy.

Result of the analysis revealed that one in three modern contraceptive users obtained their method from a private source, more than half of pill and condom users get their method from the private sector, and one out of every four rural modern contraceptive users obtain their method from a private source.

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating unprecedented challenges in each country's contraceptive market related to supply chains, overwhelmed health systems, social distancing, and economic downturns. Now, more than ever, it is critical for the public and private sectors to collaborate and create flexible solutions to respond to these new—and rapidly evolving—challenges.

Harnessing the power and potential of all market actors—government and nongovernmental, social marketing and franchising, and private commercial—is key to accelerating progress toward countries' family planning goals. Together, these actors can expand contraceptive access and choice and meet the needs and preferences of all current and potential future contraceptive users.

On average across the 36 countries analyzed,
1 in 3 modern contraceptive users
obtains her method from a private source.



Source: USAID-funded SHOPS Plus Project led by Abt Associates

ASMO Social Media Sites



ASMO Afghanistan



www.asmo.org.af



ASMO Afghan Social Marketing Org



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Staff Acknowledgement

Moheb Ali Yawar, ASMO Director of Operations

Moheb Ali Yawar, ASMO Director of Operations is an ACCA/CAT finalist, proficient and experienced in financial management, international accounting standards, planning and budgeting, internal control and operational policy development. He has had 26 years of hands-on experience in handling operations for for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, developing financial proposals for social marketing and a variety of USAID-funded health projects implemented by ASMO. Mr. Yawar joined ASMO in 2012 in the capacity of Admin and Finance Manager and promoted to the position of Director of Operations in 2014. He played a vital role in the success of ASMO by strengthening the financial, internal control, human resource and procurement functions of ASMO to meet the government of Afghanistan and donors predominantly USAID requirements. His tremendous contributions to the development and revisions of ASMO policies and procedures manual is admirable. His outstanding leadership and management skills kept the operational team inspired and motivated. His open door policy and knowledge sharing habit encouraged the team to seek professional advices when needed to ensure sound and smooth function of operational units under his auspices. ASMO Board of Directors and management acknowledge his tireless contributions during the past nine years and wish him success in his professional and personal endeavors in the future.



Launch of New Product, Reusable Sanitary Napkins

Menstruation is a normal physiological process but the onset of menstruation is a unique phenomenon for adolescent girls. Awareness about menstruation prior to menarche was found to be low among both urban and rural adolescents. The limited knowledge available was passed down informally from mothers, who were themselves lacking in knowledge of reproductive health and hygiene due to low literacy levels and socioeconomic status. Lack of menstrual hygiene and use of unhygienic clothes result in adverse outcomes like reproductive tract infections.

ASMO launched environment friendly and chemical free reusable sanitary napkins for Afghan women so that they can manage their menstruation in privacy, safety, with respect and dignity. RSN Kits are designed to provide superior feminine hygiene protection and comfort. These Kits are made from high-performance textiles and provide effective protection for 12+ months (menstrual cycles), making them a cost-effective and eco-friendly solution. The design is an "all-in-one" pad

that buttons securely into a pair of underwear. After use, the pad folds conveniently for easy storage before washing. The design is based on years of testing and feedback from girls and women around the world through an international NGO called DfG (Days for Girls).

The RSN kits are primarily produced by 118 home-based and disadvantaged women providing employment opportunities for them to improve their family livelihoods and living situation.

Key RSN benefits include:

- Will save your money
- Cloth pads reduce your impact on the environment.
- Are better for your body
- RSN is great for sensitive skin
- It is comfortable
- RSN kit helps you to be prepared for every cycle
- RSNs are quiet



Annual Financial Audit

A statutory audit is a legally required review of the accuracy of an entity's financial statements and records. The objective of an audit is to express an opinion on financial statements by examining the financial statements to get satisfied about the truth and fairness of the financial position and operating results of the entity. It gives the Board of Directors, donors and other shareholders with peace of mind and confidence that the accounts are true and fair.

According to the ASMO policy and procedures manual an annual statutory audit should be run following closure of fiscal year of the business. Nomination and selection of audit firm is a bid-solicitation process based on the qualification and eligibility criteria that is the responsibility of audit committee of ASMO Board of Directors.

After closing the financial year 2019, Board's Finance Committee selected Assurance Kabul Audit Services as the auditor of ASMO. The auditor conducted a thorough review of ASMO financial statements comprising of statement of financial position, statement of profit and loss, statement of cash flow and statement of changes in the reserve.

The auditor provided a non-qualified opinion with few recommendation for further improvements of internal control processes. Audited financial statements will be published in the website.

Shefa Wa Quwat Branded ORS & Zinc Co- Pack

Shefa Wa Quwat Kit (Shefa ORS and Quwat Zinc Tablets) or Co-Pack is another famous branded product of ASMO used for the treatment of diarrhea.

ORS and Zinc supplementation is a critical new intervention for treating diarrheal episodes in children.

The product is affordable, safe and easy to use and have the potential to dramatically lower diarrheal morbidity and mortality.

Recent studies in new developed countries suggest that administration of zinc along with new low osmolality ORS can reduce the duration and severity of diarrheal episodes for up to three months.

Use of ORS-Zinc Co-Pack for the treatment of diarrhea is in line with the Ministry of Public Health, National Health and Nutrition Sector Strategy and National Strategic Plan for the Control of Diarrheal Diseases in Afghanistan.

The product is available in the private market in all over Afghanistan.

