

Preventing Maternal Mortality: The Role Of Safe Abortion



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Reproductive
Health

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Objectives

- Describe impact of unintended pregnancy on women's health worldwide
- Identify the most effective interventions to reduce maternal mortality
- Understand the role of abortion services in reducing maternal mortality

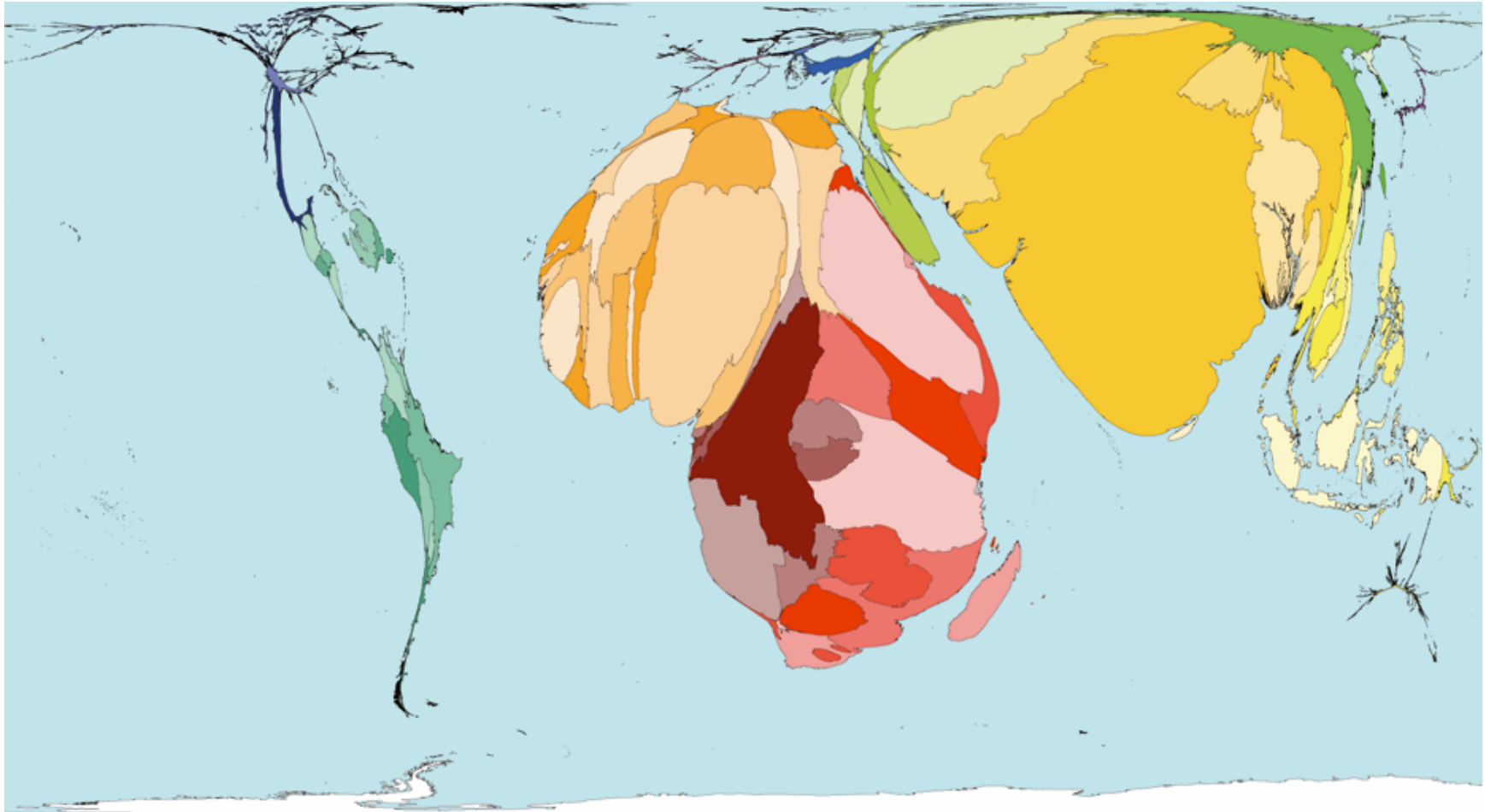
Women are critical to health and development worldwide.

- A woman's death increases her children's risk of death by ten times.
- Women produce 80% of Africa's food and are 70% of the labor force.
- Women's unpaid work accounts for one third of world GDP.
- Women run the majority of businesses and farms in developing countries.

Death Probabilities of UK Citizens, Selected Activities, 2010

Activity	No. events per 1 death
• Pregnancy	8,200 pregnancies
• General Anesthesia	185,000 operations
• Hang gliding	116,000 flights
• Scuba diving	200,000 dives
• Rock climbing	320,000 climbs
• Canoeing	720,000 outings
• Fairground rides	834,000 rides
• Rail travel	43 million journeys
• Air travel	125 million flights

Deaths of Women from Pregnancy



Causes of 358,000 Maternal Deaths World Wide in 2008

Hemorrhage	35%
Unsafe Abortion	14%
Hypertension	11%
Infection	10%
HIV	7%
Obstructed labor	6%
Other causes	17%

Unsafe Abortion as a Cause of Maternal Mortality

- 20 million unsafe abortions yearly
- 97% of unsafe abortions occur in poor countries
- ~50,000 women die from unsafe abortion yearly
- Millions of women injured
- Almost all of their pregnancies were unintended



Unsafe Abortion and Maternal Mortality

- *Leading cause of maternal deaths (10-30%)* where safe abortion is not available
 - Africa, Latin America
- Simple, inexpensive technology for safe abortion and post-abortion care (e.g., MUA, misoprostol) widely available
- Usually eliminated as cause of death where abortion is legal or allowed safely

Global Unintended Pregnancies

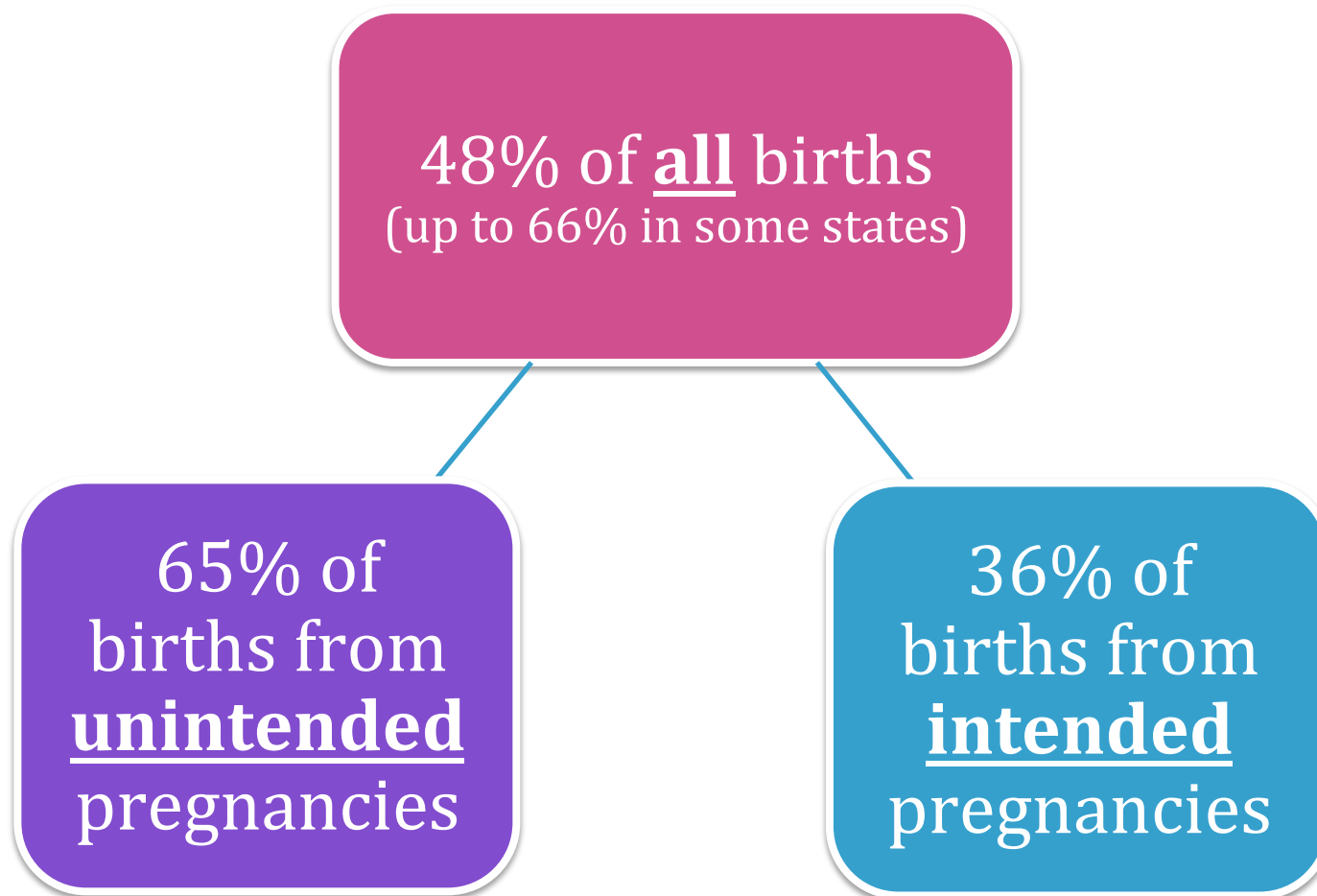
- 40% of pregnancies are unintended (80 mil/yr)
- 200 million women want better contraception
- 137 million have no access to contraception
- 64 million are using traditional methods

Unmet Need for Abortion Care

Deaths among women subsequent to unintended pregnancy, 1995-2000

Due to unsafe abortion	400,000
Due to pregnancy, labor, delivery or other causes	300,000

Public Funding for Birth in the US



Annual Public Cost of Unintended Pregnancies, USA, 2008

With
publicly-funded
contraception

\$12.5 billion

With NO
publicly-funded
contraception

\$25 billion

Access to Elective Abortion

- Michigan study before/after 1988 Medicaid abortion funding ban
- 2,120-5,800 additional births in 1991 to women who otherwise would have terminated pregnancy
 - \$ 6-7 million annual savings on abortion services
 - \$ 51-137 million federal and state expenditures for 5 years of services to the 1991 cohort
- Restricting abortion access
 - Will not compel “out-of-pocket” payment
 - Will force some women to birth

... If All Pregnancies Were Intended

- The single most effective step in reducing maternal mortality
- 45% reduction in births to unmarried women
- 31% reduction in unwanted births
- 90% reduction in births to teens

5 Steps to Reduce Maternal Mortality

From 2012 Global Health Policy Summit:

1. Make women's health a priority.
2. Select a few targeted interventions.
3. Ensure local ownership of implementation.
4. Innovate using current public and private assets for sustainability.
5. Monitor (measure results) to assure accountability.

Seven interventions have decreased maternal mortality 25% to 75% in 11 countries reaching their millennium development goal.

They cost 0.1% of GDP.