

Equity in maternal, newborn, and child health care coverage in India

Prashant Kumar Singh, Rajesh Kumar Rai, Chandan Kumar

Abstract

Background: Addressing inequitable coverage of maternal and child health care services among different socioeconomic strata of population and across states is an important part of India's contemporary health program. This has wide implications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal targets.

Objective: This paper assesses the inequity in coverage of maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) care services across household wealth quintiles in India and its states.

Design: Utilizing the District Level Household and Facility Survey conducted during 2007-08, this paper has constructed a Composite Coverage Index (CCI) in MNCH care.

Results: The mean overall coverage of 45% was estimated at the national level, ranging from 31% for the poorest to 60% for the wealthiest quintile. Moreover, a massive state-wise difference across wealth quintiles was observed in the mean overall CCI. Almost half of the Indian states and union territories recorded a $\leq 50\%$ coverage in MNCH care services, which demands special attention.

Conclusion: India needs focused efforts to address the inequity in coverage of health care services by recognising or defining underserved people and pursuing well-planned time-oriented health programs committed to ameliorate the present state of MNCH care.

Keywords: maternal, newborn and child health; composite coverage index; household economic status; states; India; millennium development goals

(Published: 10 September 2013)

Citation: Glob Health Action 2013, **6**: 22217 - <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/gha.v6i0.22217>
