

Maternal and Child Health Support Programme, Ruben Centre

Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Nairobi, Kenya.

January- June 2023 updates.

Maternal and Child Health (MCHN) program was rolled out at Ruben Health Centre with a keen focus on the health issues affecting mothers, children and families in general, from the Mukuru community. Some of the programs' objectives include recommended prenatal and well-child care, infant and maternal mortality prevention, maternal and child mental healthcare, newborn screening, child immunizations, child nutrition and services for children with special health care needs.

On May 2018, the project up scaled with the opening of a birthing unit after a feasibility study. The birthing unit provides safe, dignified and free place for women of the Mukuru community to give birth. Mothers now have 24/7 access to skilled delivery services. In 2022, the former president H.E Uhuru Kenyatta opened a new Government of Kenya (GOK) Level 4 hospital adjacent to our facility; this was after H.E visited Ruben Health Centre's maternity and saw the high number of mothers who were seeking birthing services.

Since the inception of the birthing unit, we have managed to:

- a) Admit 5607 mothers,
- b) 5240 mothers delivered,
- c) 5303 babies successful delivered,
- d) 9 neonatal deaths
- e) 1 maternal death.

The Ruben Health Centre employs a wholistic approach to health interventions through provision of promotive, preventative, curative, rehabilitative and maternity services. It encompasses several interrelated departments with the view to provide wholistic care to both mother and child. The initiatives include:

- **Maternity services:** Focus on increasing hospital skilled deliveries and reducing the rate of maternal neonatal mortality and morbidity rate.
- **Nutrition services:** Focus on growth monitoring to prevent malnutrition and promote good nutritional practices and early detection and management of acute malnutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers and children below five years of age.
- **Antenatal services:** Focus on the implementation of focused antenatal care with key attention to the 4 visit Indicator.
- **Reproductive and Post-Natal services:** Focus on providing wholistic reproductive health education and services.
- **Child welfare services:** (Kenya expanded program of immunization) Focus on the provision of inoculation services to prevent childhood diseases.

Nutrition

In Kenya; as of December 2022, the overall prevalence of malnutrition was 11% was underweight, with 4% wasted. Children under five years often suffer from chronic malnutrition in Nairobi due to a sustained lack of adequate nutrients, which leads to delayed milestone and growth failure. These findings of high levels of under-nutrition in urban poor settings is not extremely surprising given that under-nutrition, and particularly stunting, persists in Kenya with the prevalence of stunting among children under five years being the highest rate in East Africa.

The Ruben Health Centre responds to this by providing a supplementary feeding programme and through community-based rehabilitative services. The Ruben Health Centre deploys outpatient services in order to manage malnutrition, especially for children under 5 years who present to the facility without other health complications. Patients that arrive with severe nutrition, Tuberculosis, and other complications are referred to inpatient management as per the Kenya Ministry of Health guidelines. This strategy aims to reduce unnecessary inpatient hospital admissions as well as reducing mortality and morbidity rates by managing children within a familiar home setup environment. It also empowers the household members with the necessary skills and knowledge in nutrition. Community health volunteers remain active in the community

by mobilizing families and carrying out home visits to follow up and report back to the Centre. During the reporting period (January to June 2023), 86 children were admitted in the supplementary feeding programme and 55 children with severe acute malnutrition were enrolled in the outpatient therapeutic programme.

Due to limited resources within the families, the nutritional needs of the children are not always given the priority they deserve. The Ruben Health Centre continues to employ the following strategies to reach the needy cases:

- a) Active case findings are done every Friday with the help of the community health volunteers to find uncaptured malnutrition cases.
- b) The Radio Station Ruben FM 99.9 sensitizes, mobilizes and creates awareness to the Mukuru community on the appropriate health seeking behavior.
- c) The Malezi Bora drive by the government done twice a year (May and November) focuses on accelerating uptake of Ruben Health Centre services, which include Vitamin A supplementation and deworming for all children under five years. The Ruben staff target specific community areas identified to be in need. (In May 2023- 15,954 households reached and 13,138 children were dewormed and 10,014 supplemented with vitamin A.
- d) One-on-One and group health education was administered to all the clients who sought nutrition healthcare services.
- e) Defaulter tracing with the help of the community health volunteers was done whenever clients did not show up for their appointment.

Birthing services

Kangaroo mother care.

Kangaroo mother care (KMC) is an early and continuous skin to skin contact between baby and mother's chest for premature and low birth weight babies below 2500g.

KMC has greatly contributed to decrease in infant morbidity and mortality rate for babies born in Ruben maternity unit. KMC provides the warmth to the baby, promotes exclusive breastfeeding, improves in weight gain, reduces infection and promotes mother/father baby bonding. It has given women with piece of mind to know that their babies can survive despite great odds.

Special achievements

a) Triplet delivery.

“Triplets! A blessing or a curse?” These were the words of Ruben Centre Director Br. Frank O’Shea when asked on his opinion with regards to Ruben Health Centre’s maternity aiding a mother from Mukuru deliver triplets through normal delivery on February 21st, 2023. According to the mother of two boys and a girl, the most she had anticipated were twins, given the size of her bump during pregnancy.

“I thought I was carrying one big baby or twins and I chose to deliver at the only maternity in Mukuru because this is where I registered Linda Mama at. When the time to deliver came, I pushed the first baby. The midwife told me to push again. However, I then was shocked when she told me there was another baby after successfully pushing the second one,” Joyce Atieno informed us.

The family, which already had daughters aged 9 and 3 years respectively, is living from hand to mouth in a 10 foot by 10 foot iron sheet room in Mukuru kwa Ruben. According to Vinus Musungu, the father of the children who is a casual worker, said he was shocked at the news that God had blessed him with triplets.

Instead of sending them home as usual, Br. Frank opted to keep them under watch for a whole week checking on the mother and the baby’s health in a private room. Ruben Centre has already been able to

cater for their immediate needs including clothes, blankets, diapers, and baby formula “nan formula milk” to supplement the mum feeding her babies.

“We as Ruben Centre are planning to support this family for about six months as it finds ways of sustaining itself and maybe come to terms with the task ahead,” said Br. Frank. “We are happy that our health facility is up-to task and is already attending to the babies George, Sam and the sister Shakaina” he added, noting that this is the first case of its kind out of the more than 5,000 deliveries recorded at the maternity hospital since its inception in May 2018

As Ruben maternity team we felt happy towards our success seeing both mother and baby are healthy and doing well Our care does not stop their routine checkup and follow up on growth and monitoring always consistently in cooperation with other community healthcare workers.



a) b) c)

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 Relationship to child/ren (if applicable): Mother
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d) Figure 1.

(a)& (b) shows happy Bro. Frank enjoying with the gifts, (c) the happy mother and (d) the mother’s signed consent.

b) 19 years teenage delivery.

A 19 years old girl was received into our labor ward, on assessment she was distraught in labor. Labor progressed well and delivered a bouncing baby girl -3kgs at 0900hrs EST on 20th June 2023. On admission, the mother had no baby cloths, cotton wool, no diapers, nor baby blanket. The facility had to intervene and provide all the necessary requirements for the baby.

Once all the delivery processes were completed both baby and mother stable, the duty nurse noted that the mother was in distress and emotional. The nurse took the mother to the private room (kangaroo mother care room) and she narrated her story. From the story, the young mother lost her mother when she was 15 years, she is the first born in a family of 3 children, due to the heavy and unbearable burden of taking care

of her younger siblings, and she had to drop out of school in form two. The father who was working as a security guard had lost his job.

Upon listening to her story, the maternity in charge (Agripina Wiyala) forwarded the case to the director-Bro. Frank O'Shea and the social work office who took it up and followed the right channel and confirmed that the family was indeed in dire need of help and support. The father to the young teenage mother was invited over counselled and was empowered to start a small business to be able to take care of his family.

Birthing unit Fifth Anniversary.

Our birthing unit turned five this year! This milestone represents an incredible journey of providing essential maternal support and care to our vibrant community. The event was graced by esteemed guests, including Zipporah Mwangi, Chief Officer for Business and Hustler Opportunities, Clement Sijenyi, Chief Officer for City Culture, Arts, and Tourism, Tom Nyakaba, Chief Officer for Public Health, and many other remarkable individuals. Their presence highlighted the profound significance of Ruben Centre's accomplishments in maternal care.

Over the past 5 years, Ruben Health Centre Maternity has become an integral part of our community, offering comprehensive healthcare services and unwavering support to expectant mothers. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the community for their trust and invaluable contributions in making our clinic a resounding success.

The presence of Zipporah Mwangi as our guest of honor emphasized the recognition and appreciation from the local government. Her commitment to empowering women and uplifting communities aligns perfectly with our mission. Together, we are dedicated to improving maternal health and collaborating for a brighter future.

With over 5,500 expectant mothers receiving comprehensive prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care, Ruben Health Centre has played a pivotal role in ensuring safer deliveries, reducing maternal mortality rates, and supporting the well-being of both mother and child.

We express our deepest gratitude to our partners and stakeholders whose collaborative efforts have made our success possible. Your dedication and financial assistance have helped us expand our reach, ensuring that more mothers and babies receive the exceptional care they deserve.

The celebration was broadcasted live on Ruben FM, enabling the wider community to witness the transformative work of Ruben Health Centre. This extended reach has fostered greater awareness and appreciation for the essential services provided by our maternity unit.

As we reflect on the past and look to the future, Ruben Health Centre remains committed to providing exceptional maternal care, child, nutrition and reproductive health support. With the trust and support of our community and the continued collaboration of our partners and stakeholders, we will continue to expand our reach and ensure that every mother and baby receives the quality healthcare they deserve.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, we can create a future where every pregnancy is safe, healthy, and filled with joy. - At Ruben Health Centre, we listen, we care.

Ambulance fifth Anniversary.

Availability of a 24 hours ambulance services in RC birthing unit has greatly contributed to the success of the program so far, since the procurement of the ambulance vehicle 5 years ago, 487 mothers and 99 infants have been referred to higher facilities like Kenyatta national hospital, Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital and Mbagathi Hospital just to mention for further management (caesarian section) due to poor progress of labor, fetal distress, obstructed labor, Antepartum hemorrhage (APH), Postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) and malpresentation (breech or face presentation) The ambulance is always available in case of any emergency, in good condition with all the necessary emergency instruments. The ambulance driver is always ready and available when in need and acts faster on emergencies.

Figure 2. Ambulance.



Ultrasound services.

The joy that every expectant couple, family, or community has when a woman gets pregnant is suddenly turned into sorrow and mourning when the woman dies during pregnancy or child birth, or when the baby dies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the five major causes of maternal mortality are hemorrhage, sepsis, complications of abortion, eclampsia, and obstructed labor.

The WHO similarly lists the most common causes of neonatal mortality as infections, birth asphyxia, birth injuries, preterm births, and birth defects. It is worth noting that these mortality causes are conditions for which timely ultrasound imaging could be of immense help in early diagnosis and hence intervention, leading to the reduction of mortality rates among mothers and their babies. Ectopic pregnancy, abortion, and gestational trophoblastic diseases (GTDs) are the commonest conditions of the first-trimester that can cause maternal mortality, due to the possibility of severe hemorrhage, shock or sepsis.

Obstetric Ultrasound scan helps to confirm viability of a pregnancy, gestational age, multiple pregnancies and it also helps rule out fetal abnormalities early enough. Routine sonography during pregnancy has been advocated to detect anatomical congenital anomalies and to diagnose conditions associated with poor pregnancy outcome, such as the small-for-gestational-age fetus, multiple gestations, and to improve dating of pregnancy.

As Ruben Health Centre, we encourage expectant mothers to have at least two obstetric scans done before labor and delivery. This has helped us to provide a safe, non-invasive, and accurate method to clinically evaluation of the pregnancy, uterus and fetus, right from the confirmation of a viable (alive) pregnancy to throughout the woman's pregnancy thus minimizing neonatal and maternal deaths. During the reporting period, a total of 567 scans were conducted at Ruben Health Centre.

Figure 3- Picture (sonographer)

