



SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL SURGICAL SKILLS- EMERGENCY MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTHCARE PROGRAM (ESS-EMCH)



The ESS-EMCH program has been designed to help countries where, as a result of extreme poverty, there are high maternal, infant and child mortality rates and much unnecessary suffering. Poor management of emergencies is a major cause of mortality in mothers and children.

Typically the health facilities and hospitals in such countries not only lack adequate basic equipment, emergency drugs and medical supplies but health workers lack the skills needed to manage emergencies, particularly those related to obstetric complications, resuscitation at birth and life threatening problems in the newborn infant, serious paediatric illnesses and trauma. Moreover, there is rarely any Continuing Medical Education for health workers of all levels and also a poor state of morale.

Training and audit

Step 1 aims to improve the knowledge and skills of those health workers providing care at the front line in the management of emergencies. The training component of the program uses an internationally tested educational approach involving skill stations, workshops, lectures and scenarios to improve the management of an emergency in the first hours of its presentation as well as to identify an impending emergency which if not recognised and managed rapidly and appropriately may lead to collapse and possible death or permanent brain injury.

In the first instance, an audit of those patients benefiting from emergency care is provided by an analysis of "Logbooks" documenting every resuscitation. Later, mortality data will be analysed.

Advocacy: infrastructure and systems development

Step 2 is to ensure that those trained can effectively use their skills 24 hours every day. An additional and major part of this program aims to ensure through advocacy that hospitals and other health facilities have sufficient emergency drugs and medical supplies provided by the local Government to treat patients safely and reliably. The program also assists the Government in refurbishing its health facilities and provides basic and essential emergency equipment.

This is achieved through the following steps:

- 1. Recognising and responding to the individual suffering an emergency**
- 2. Transport: Implementation of a Flying Squad service** To create a continuity of care within and between the community and the hospitals, the program includes the setting up of a Flying Squad for maternal and early childhood emergencies run by midwives who have been through the ESS-EMCH training course providing 24 hours a day 7 days a week cover. They each have a mobile emergency kit and are supported at all times by a dedicated ambulance with driver.
- 3. Reception of emergencies at the hospital**
 - **This requires an effective and compassionate security system throughout the hospital.**
 - **Essential emergency equipment must be available.** Most of the basic emergency equipment needed for the ESS-EMCH program is obtained by Childhealth Advocacy International (CAI) through a program of re-cycling from the UK National and Private Health Service Hospitals. Some equipment donated is brand new, but a considerable proportion comes from hospitals in the UK which are upgrading and do not need perfectly usable items.

Specialised training equipment for the ESS-EMCH courses, such as manikins, computers, multimedia and overhead projectors, is also purchased by CAI and The Advanced Life Support group (ALSG).

- **Essential emergency drugs and medical supplies must be available.** Emergency drugs such as antibiotics, oxygen, adrenaline, analgesics, and fluids, together with medical supplies and blood transfusions are the responsibility of The Government and provided under a Memorandum of Understanding signed for the program.
- **An effective blood transfusion service is essential.**

4. Definitive Care after the arrival of an emergency

This requires effective and safe operating theatres and the provision of adequately equipped, hygienic and appropriately staffed emergency rooms and hospital wards.

Organisational Capacity

The ESS-EMCH Project results from a partnership between WHO (both Geneva and the local in-country Offices), ALSG, CAI and the reproductive and child health departments of the local Government of the country.