

Tema Metro Health Directorate records significant reduction in maternal mortality

The Tema Metropolitan Health Directorate (TMHD) recorded seven maternal mortality cases in 2023, showing a significant reduction over the 23 documented in 2022.

Ms Priscilla Aboagye-Mensah, a Public Health nurse at the Directorate's Reproductive Health and Child Unit, disclosed this during the TMHD's 2023 annual performance review.

She said that the reduction was a great achievement looking at the trend of 23 and 25 each recorded for 2022, 2021-2020 respectively, adding that, while 18 maternal deaths were seen in 2019, 31 were recorded in 2018 and 47 in 2017.

She said five of the 2023 deaths were recorded at the Tema General Hospital, explaining that, out of those five, two were the hospital's cases, while the three were mothers who were transferred from other health institutions.

She further said that the metropolis had recorded four maternal mortality cases at the end of November 2023, adding that the remaining three occurred in December.

She said even though they could not reach their target of below-five maternal deaths, reducing it to a single digit was impressive and a first step to curbing the rate.

The public health nurse said some of the strategies put in place that led to the decline included having staff on alert to identify possible risks that could lead to death, and that training was also done for health workers to build their capacity on the issues.

She said maternal auditing was done every day, during which everything was checked, including the labour ward activities, to eliminate potential errors that could lead to more deaths, adding that, it helped to identify gaps in and outside the cases for them to come up with recommendations to prevent fatali-

ties.

Ms Aboagye-Mensah further said that Tema General Hospital, which handles most maternal complications as a referral institution, currently has about five obstetricians and gynaecologists, which has improved the specialist care for patients.

She said a WhatsApp group platform has also been created with all those who matter in maternal health from the various health institutions, and this had made it easy for referral cases to be handled with speed as the institution referring could alert the hospital ahead for them to be ready to receive the patient on arrival, eliminating any delays.

She said staff also received motivation to work hard to prevent death, while the directorate also collaborated with a non-governmental organisation to assist needy mothers, which encouraged them to report to the hospital early even when they do have all their delivery items.

She said they also embarked on community audits and community education whenever a mother died less than 24 hours after admission, saying such audits revealed that some of the mothers were not attending antenatal and were resorting to drinking concoctions and attending prayer camps.

Dr Sally Quartey, the Director of Health Services, Tema Metropolitan Health Directorate, commended the Tema General Hospital for their immense contribution and hard work towards reducing maternal mortality in the metropolis.

She, together with Mrs Monica Owusu Afoakwah, the Deputy Director of Nursing Services at the Directorate, on behalf of the Directorate presented a plaque to the hospital in appreciation of their commitment to lowering the number of deaths among mothers.