

# Northern Region records upsurge in maternal mortality

From Mohammed Fugu, TAMALE

**M**ATERNAL mortality has worsened in the Northern Region from 69 cases in 2022 to 100 in 2023.

This brought the institutional maternal mortality rate to 136.7 per 100,000 live births in 2023 compared to 94.5 per 100,000 live births for the year 2022, with the national target being 125 per 100,000 live births.

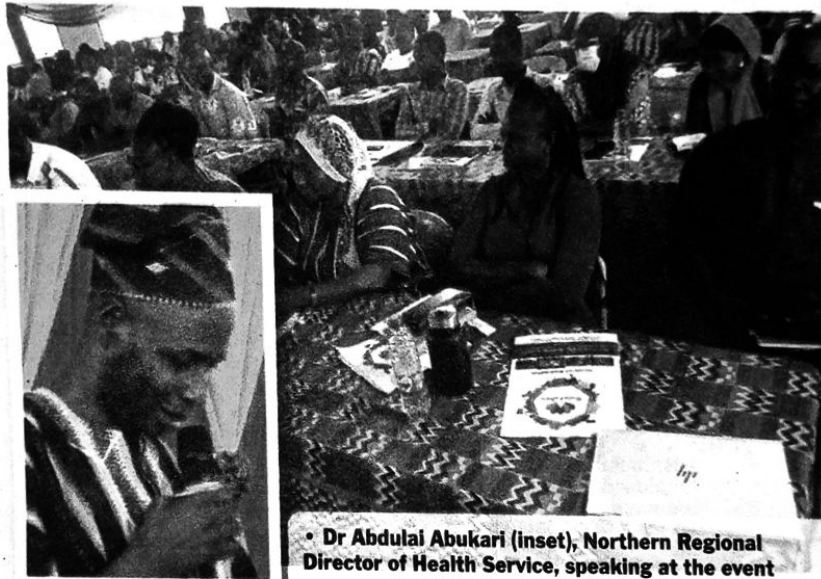
The Northern Regional Health Directorate has consequently expressed concern about the upsurge in maternal mortality in the region and called for deliberate efforts to address the situation.

At the 2023 annual performance review in Tamale, the Regional Director of Health Services, Dr Abdulai Abukari, attributed the phenomenon to inadequate logistics, infrastructure, doctors and bad roads to health centres in deprived communities, among other factors.

Nonetheless, he said, the directorate had mapped out stringent measures towards addressing the rising maternal deaths in the region.

## Annual review

The three-day conference brought together representatives from all the public health facilities and stakeholders in the region to review the performance of the region and challenges and deliberate on ways to improve healthcare services.



• Dr Abdulai Abukari (inset), Northern Regional Director of Health Service, speaking at the event

It was on the theme: "Sustaining Essential Health Service Delivery Towards Achieving Universal Health Coverage: The Role of Stakeholders in Resources Mobilisation".

## Antenatal clinic

Addressing the participants, Dr Abukari indicated that Antenatal Clinic coverage also recorded 97.2 per cent in 2023 as against 102.4 per cent within the same period in 2022.

He added that the region also recorded a slight decrease in the coverage of skilled deliveries from 76.8 per cent in 2022 as against 75.2 per cent in 2023.

"Our Caesarean section rate also witnessed a slight decrease from 10.8 per

cent in 2022 to 9.8 per cent in 2023 as against the recommended target of 15 per cent in the region, this is as a result of the lack of anaesthesia machines in some health facilities in the region," he noted.

## Quality service delivery

For his part, the Director General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr

Patrick Kuma Aboagye, reiterated the GHS's commitment to strengthening the primary healthcare system to improve quality service delivery.

He noted that "we can achieve Universal Health Coverage if we have a good Primary Health Care (PHC) system, so improving our PHC system is an important venture for us".

He indicated that the country was just six years away from achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030 but its coverage index was hovering around 50 per cent, adding that "this clearly is not good enough to achieve UHC over the remaining six years".

While urging health professionals to remain focused and discharge their duties diligently to improve service delivery, Dr Aboagye called on all stakeholders to join forces to address the challenges confronting the sector.

The Northern Regional Minister, Shani Alhassan Shaibu, in a speech read on his behalf by the acting Chief Director of the Northern Regional Coordinating Council, Sumaila Ewuntoma Abudu, commended the directorate for improving general health care in the region in the face of the numerous challenges.

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