Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Newborn Care: A Guide to Essential Practice

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Maternal and neonatal ill health is a large burden on the development capacity of individuals, communities and societies. Reducing maternal and childhood/infant mortality is a goal taken by world leaders as part of the Millennium Declaration. Most of perinatal mortality is a consequence of poor health and the inadequate care of the mother before, during and after delivery.

This book provides guidelines for essential care during pregnancy, labour, the immediate postpartum period, and the care of the newborn during the first few days of life. The recommendations in this book are generic and are applicable to the primary level of health care, the care closest to where the woman lives.

In addition to the introductory chapters, the book consists of the following chapters: Principles of Good Care, Quick Check, Rapid assessment and Management of Women of Childbearing Age, Antenatal Care, Childbirth-Labour, Delivery and Immediate Postpartum Care, Postpartum Care, Preventive Measures and Additional Treatments for the Woman, Informing and Counseling on HIV, The Woman With Special Needs, Newborn Care, Breastfeeding, Preventive Measures And Treatment Care For The Newborn, Equipment, Supplies, Drugs, Laboratory Tests, Information And Counseling Sheets, Records And Forms.

The guide is meant to be a tool for clinical decision-making, and includes flow charts that are easy to read and color-coded to attract the attention to the most serious conditions. The flow charts are cross-referenced to relevant treatment and/or informative pages in other parts of the guide. The flow charts are titled to show the scenario of history, examination, important signs to look for, diagnosis and differential diagnosis followed by treatment and post treatment activities.

The chapter on antenatal care has different flow charts for possible pregnancy problems such as bleeding in early pregnancy, pre-eclampsia, vaginal discharge, urinary symptoms, education, follow-up plans and birth plans.

The chapter dealing with intrapartum care gives guidelines on the diagnosis of labour, monitoring during labour, management of all stages of labour, and the management of important and serious complications such as shoulder dystocia, breech presentation, bleeding, and perineal tears. Newborn care chapters deal with evaluation of the normal newborn, identifying possible problem and breast feeding advices.

There is much important information on preventive care, screening and management of HIV, anaemia, adolescent pregnancy, and on women living with violence, and on contraception. This book is a simple and important tool for healthcare providers involved in the primary care of pregnancy childbirth and newborn care.