

## ABSTRACT

Maternal and newborn health care (MNH) services are mainly provided by midwives among basic health staff in Myanmar. To date, midwives are bogged down with multiple activities due to the expansion of public health programs and increased population growth. Therefore, a cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in Htantabin, Hmawbi and Hlegu townships in northern Yangon district in 2015. The primary objective was to identify the challenges experienced by midwives in provision of maternal and newborn health care services in selected townships of northern district of Yangon. A total of 108 midwives were interviewed by using a structured, pre-tested questionnaire. The age ranged from 24 to 55 years (mean age of  $36.4 \pm 7.3$  years). Almost all midwives performed their basic functions of antenatal (AN), delivery and postnatal (PN) care services. Population coverage for each midwife ranged from 392 to 22,360 with the median of 4,031 (IQR=3,123). The mean numbers of AN, delivery, PN patient and newborn were 96 ( $\pm 55.78$ ), 55 ( $\pm 35.49$ ), 85 ( $\pm 66.18$ ) and 85 ( $\pm 66.29$ ) respectively for a midwife within previous one year. The mean numbers of new AN, delivery and PN patients were 9, 5 and 7 per month respectively for each midwife. They encountered operational challenges including an insufficient supply of drugs and instruments, poor patient compliance and increased workload in provision of the MNH services. In particular, about 14% had not enough iron and folic acid tablets to correct anemia of pregnancy; 41% had not enough HIV test kits which is essential for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMCT); 13% and 30.6% of midwives had experienced out of stock for misoprostol and oxytocin for few months that were essential for prevention of postpartum hemorrhage. Nearly 64% of midwives experienced ad-hoc activities within previous one month in which 53.6% considered that such activities caused mild disturbance to their routine MNH services. Last time training was received within previous one year in 87% and majority of respondents satisfied with the information they got. Nearly 82% had AMWs within their jurisdiction. About 79% of midwives fulfilled the timeliness of reports. With regards to insufficient supply and increased workload, 75% tried to overcome these challenges by reporting to their superiors. Almost all midwives could overcome the poor patient compliance by the provision of health education. Regarding their needs, 87.0%, 64.8% and 42.6% of