

FMCH QUARTERLY

Tackling malnutrition in innovative ways. Every day.

A promising future

5 month-old Smriti is doing very well despite her low birth weight: 2.3 kg (below 3rd percentile)

She first came to FMCH when she was a month old, as her mother was worried about insufficient weight gain. Smriti's mother Reema shared with the team that being a nuclear family, she didn't have any support system, and she was worried about her child's health. The FMCH team worked with Reema, providing her with important knowledge about breastfeeding and good, varied nutrition for her self, as well as support through regular home visits. Reema was given the supplementary nutrition FMCH provides to pregnant & lactating mothers, and she felt that it helped her. Slowly Smriti started



gaining weight and today, four months after she first came to the clinic, Smriti has a healthy weight of 6.26 kg (around 20th percentile).

As long as we are able to ensure good nutrition before the second birthday, children should reach their physical and intellectual potential. Smriti is all set for a promising future!

Facts and figures

779,000

newborn babies die
in India
every year.

That's

**2,134 newborn deaths
every day**

or

**89 newborn deaths
every hour**

*London School of Hygiene and Tropical
Medicine*

May 2014

www.fmch-india.org

FMCH on Mumbai's airwaves



In early September FMCH participated in Radio 1's "Good Morning Mumbai" broadcast. Host Hrishikesh Kannan interviewed our Executive Director Piya Mukherjee, during National Nutrition Week. This was a great opportunity to raise awareness about the problems of poverty, under-nutrition, stunting and poor brain development. The host was particularly impressed with our Pregnancy Club initiative, and the First 1000 Days programme. Radio 1 gave us the opportunity to tell our story to a large audience and spread awareness not just about malnutrition but how FMCH is tackling it every day.

FMCH welcomes Fulbright Scholar



We are delighted to announce that Priyanka Athavale, a recipient of the prestigious US Fulbright scholarship, has chosen to spend nine months with FMCH in Mumbai, conducting research into the reasons for growth faltering among young children in vulnerable communities.

A recent graduate of University of California, Berkeley, Priyanka has degrees in Molecular Cell Biology and Public Health – with an emphasis on global poverty. She had worked previously with FMCH in Mumbai, and also in Nepal, conducting research into malnutrition's effect on oral and dental health.

Priyanka plans to use her Fulbright opportunity to work closely with FMCH communities in urban Mumbai, to examine the barriers that prevent certain families from implementing proper nutrition and health practices, thereby revealing causes of persistent under-nutrition in Mumbai's urban slums.

She has a passion for designing community-based solutions to problems, and she sincerely enjoys working with people. FMCH is fortunate to have Priyanka join our team. Her research should enable us to identify families who need extra help, and will make our interventions more effective.

BG India agrees to fund Powai project

BG India has kindly agreed to sponsor our new programmes tackling malnutrition in the Powai area, north of Mumbai, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The company has already been supporting our work in Ganesh Nagar, Dhobi Ghat, so we are very pleased to have this vote of confidence. The new programmes are bringing our work to new communities, enabling us to reach many more needy families, treating and preventing malnutrition, helping children to achieve their full potential, and escape the cycle of poverty.



Measuring our impact

Earlier this year the FMCH team conducted two community assessments in Mumbai; one in a slum community in Powai and second in the northern tribal community of Virar. The assessments were conducted using the WHO-recommended reproductive health and infant-young-child-feeding practice tools. The team conducted a sample survey across the community with the aim of building a better understanding of the communities (in terms of socio-economic status as well as beliefs and practices related to pregnancy, child birth and food, as well as health and hygiene) before the FMCH intervention is initiated. This activity, though heavy on resources spent, revealed critical information about the communities. It will provide a baseline against which we shall measure our impact.



In Virar 52% of the population remains below the poverty line (less than Rs 5000 per month) while in Powai it is 16%. However in Powai 61% of the population lives just above the line with an average monthly income below Rs 10,000 (£102).

Apart from severely restricted financial resources, the other issue in Virar is the lack of access to the Public Distribution System – subsidised rations. The tribal population of Virar does not have access to fresh or varied fruit and vegetables.

The prevalence of malnutrition in women is very high in Virar (25% measured by MUAC - mid upper-arm circumference). In Powai the rate is 7% - still unacceptably high.

The global acceptable age for giving birth to a woman's first child is 19 years. According to NFHS3 [National Family Health Survey 3 - 2005-6], approximately 19% of Indian women give birth to their first child before the age of 19. Our survey showed that in Powai, the figure is 22% and in Virar it is as high as 33%.

One of the most alarming facts found in Powai was the lack of clean toilets. There are some community toilets in the area, but given the large population, they remain neither clean nor hygienic. Children routinely defecate outside their homes, and sometimes even inside. Open defecation is known to be a major factor in malnutrition. "India's Number Two problem".

India Nutrition Week Street Play

National Nutrition Week is celebrated in India during the first week of September. This year FMCH collaborated with SVT College of Home Science. Third year BSc (Applied Nutrition) students from the college prepared a street play on the theme of nutrition during pregnancy called *Tandarust maa aur tandarust baccha* (healthy mother healthy child).

The FMCH team supported the girls through the street play development. The students performed the street play on 5th and 6th of September 2014 at all our current project sites.



The key messages delivered through this street play were:

- A mother should register with the hospital as soon as she knows that she is pregnant
- Regular checkups at hospital during pregnancy
- Good nutrition during pregnancy
- Gap of 3 years between two children
- Proper rest and exercise during pregnancy.

We hope to provide training for Pregnancy Clubs in more communities, as this initiative is proving so successful at giving children the best start in life, as well as making mother-to-be feel special.

Save the dates

Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon 2015

Sunday 18th Jan

AWC

Bourbon Street Bash

Saturday 21st March 2015

Please join us and help to support our work

Register your interest in walking or running in SCMM by emailing

contact@fmch-india.org

Our sincere thanks to all who supported
Footsteps4Good
and the AWC Mela

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