# Expanding access to rural Nepal through nurse provision of first trimester medical abortion

Deeb Shrestha Dangal, MD Kusum Thapa , MD

Moderator: Alison Edelman, MD, MPH



# Objectives

#### To describe and discuss:

- Nepal's program to increase access to abortion in rural areas
- the process for provider supportive supervision/ mentoring, adverse event reporting and continuing quality improvement for this program
- lessons learned and challenges of MA services by nurses located in rural areas



# Legalization Process in Nepal

#### 2002:

Law changed; MA initiated



Strictly illegal and culturally not acceptable

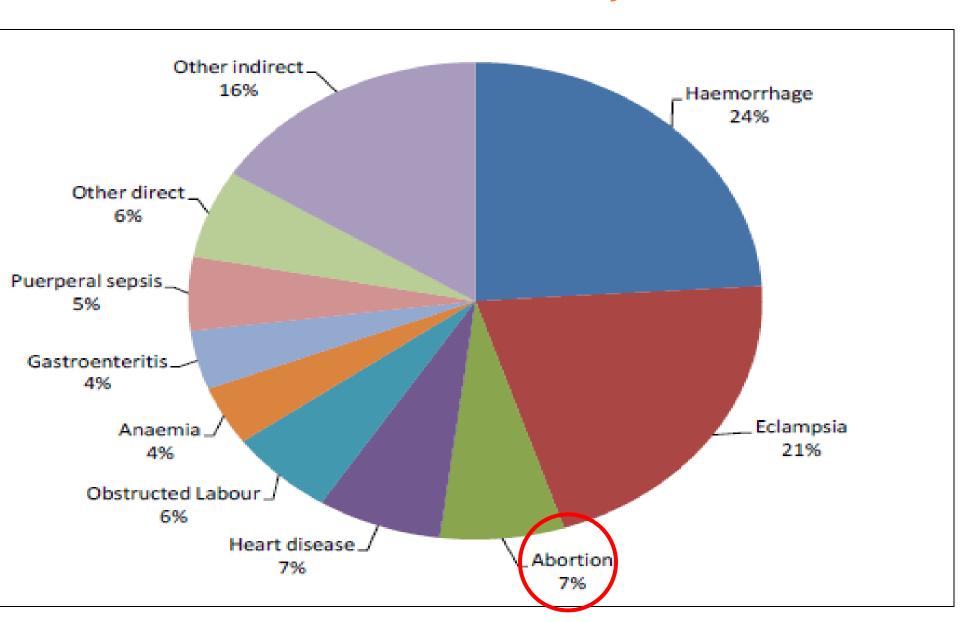
#### 2004:

First instance of safe and legal abortion practices at a maternity hospital

#### Nepali Abortion Law

- Up to 12 weeks gestation for any indication, on request
- Up to 18 weeks gestation in cases of rape and incest
- At any time if the mental or physical health or the life of the pregnant woman is at risk (with approval of a medical practitioner)
- At any time if the fetus is deformed and incompatible with life (with approval of a medical practitioner).
- The pregnant woman alone has the right to choose to continue or end a pregnancy and that the consent of a legal guardian is required for minors (16 years or younger) and for women who are mentally incompetent.
- Abortion for purposes of sex selection is prohibited.

### Causes of Maternal Mortality 2008/09



#### What legal abortion looks like







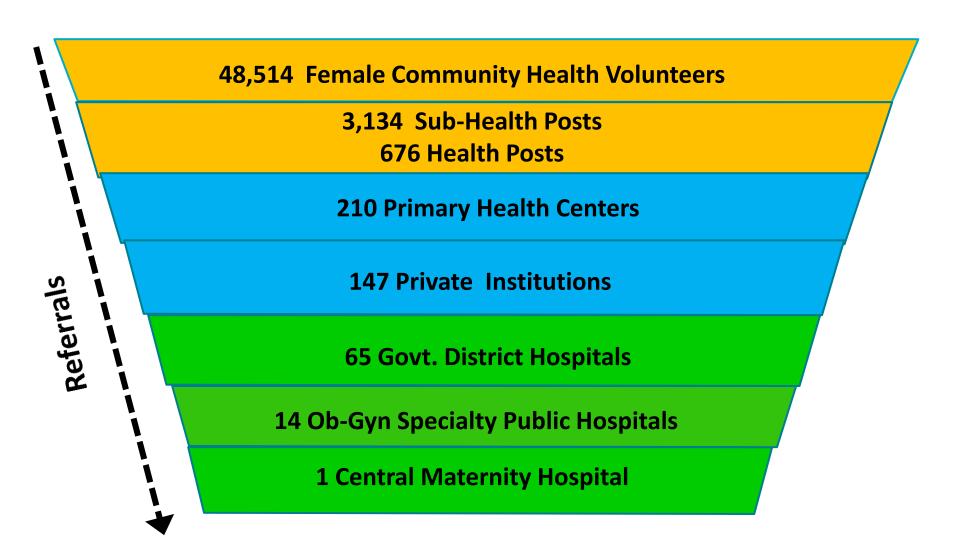
LISTED PROVIDERS

**LOGO** 

**LISTED SITES** 



#### Type of facilities and the referral mechanism





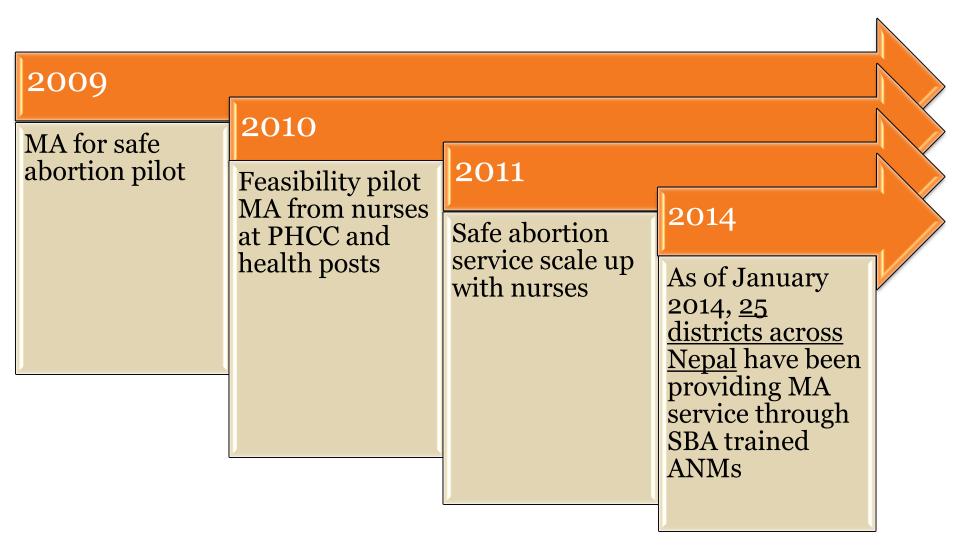






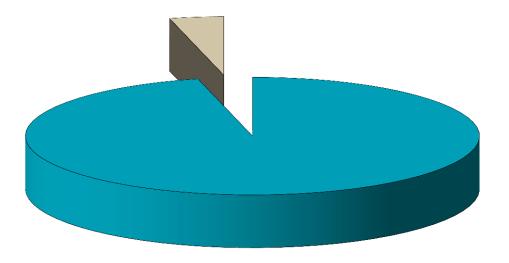
Level of service	Roles
Female community Health Volunteers (FCHVs)	Increase awareness and referrals (pregnancy testing)
Sub-Health Post	Increase awareness and referrals Obstetrical first aid
Health Post/birthing centers	MA service delivery and referral for complication management
Primary Health Care Center	MA/MVA services and referral for complication management
District Hospital	MA/MVA services and referral for complication management if severe
Zonal/Regional/Central Hospital	MA/MVA and 2 <sup>nd</sup> trim service

# Task sharing programming



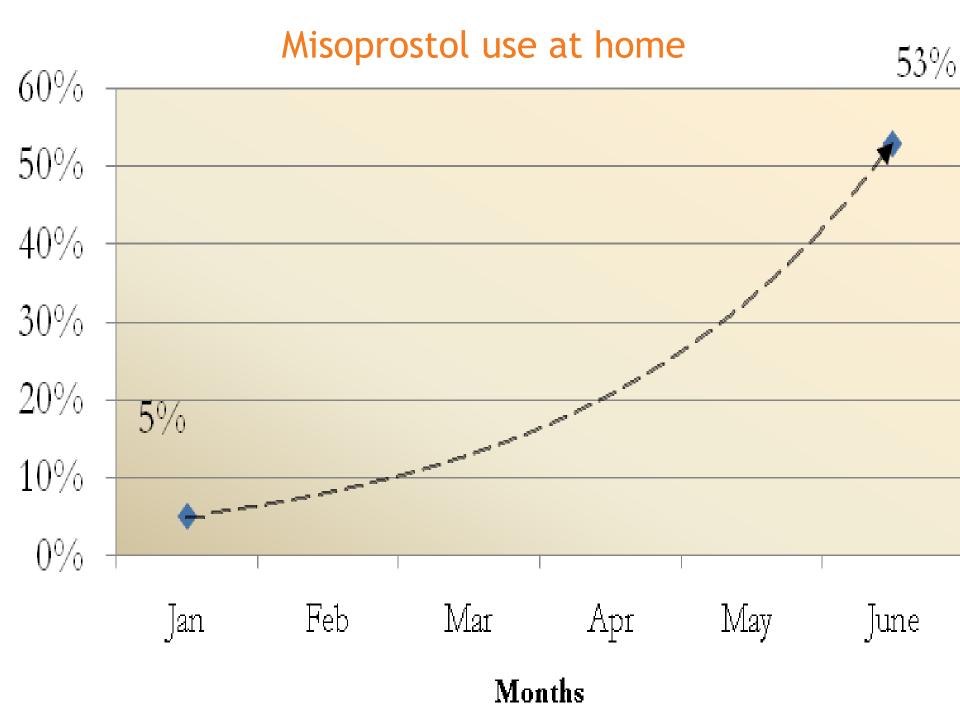
#### **Success Rate**

MVA needed: 3.7%



MA: 96.3%

$$N = 1718$$



#### Post-pilot MA Scale-Up

- Government ensuring MA drug distribution for public sector
- Government has approved MA-only training for auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs); Already implemented in 25 districts.
- PSI working with pharmacists and private sector to ensure drug supply, provide accurate information and referral



### Pre-training approach

District level orientation & planning meeting

Site base line (Minimum logistic requirement)

Site and providers selection

**VCAT** 

Trainers update (Ipas)

#### **Training**

#### Competency based approaches

Model practice followed by practice on clients

Knowledge assessment

Clinical assessment

# Information on clinical mentors

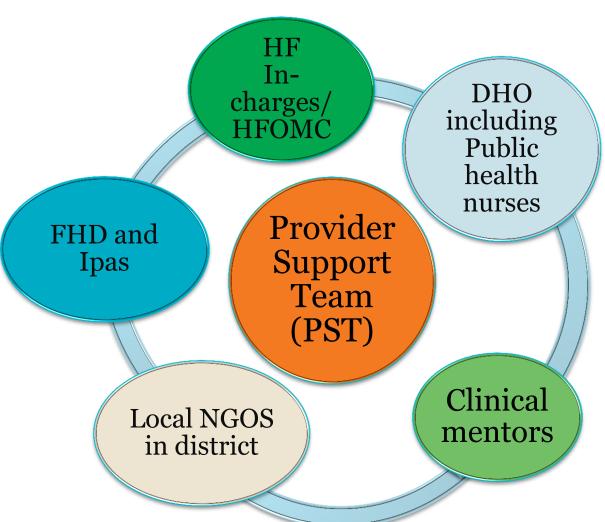
Provide information on the objective of clinical mentors

Provide the name and telephone number of the clinical mentors

#### Supply

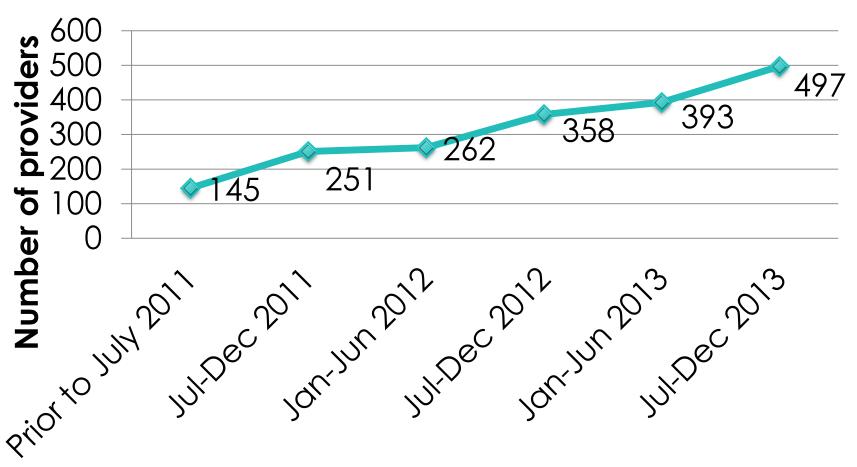
MA drug supply (5 packets/ providers)

## Post-training



- 1. Form Dist. level PST
- 2. Site set up
- 3. Whole site orientation
- 4. Quarterly self assessment
- 5. Clinical mentoring
- 6. Providers networking mtg.

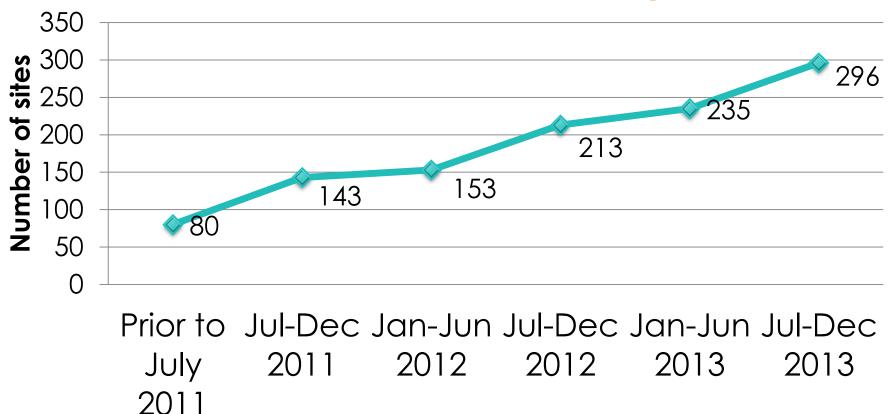
# Nurses trained in providing safe abortion services (cumulative each year)



#### **Timeline**

Source: Ipas Nepal database, 2014

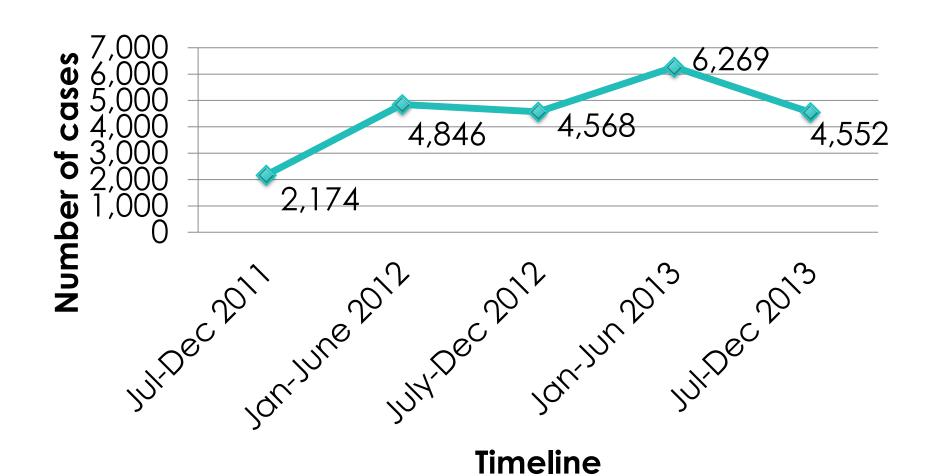
# Primary level sites providing safe abortion service through MA



**Timeline** 

Source: Ipas Nepal database, 2014

#### Women served



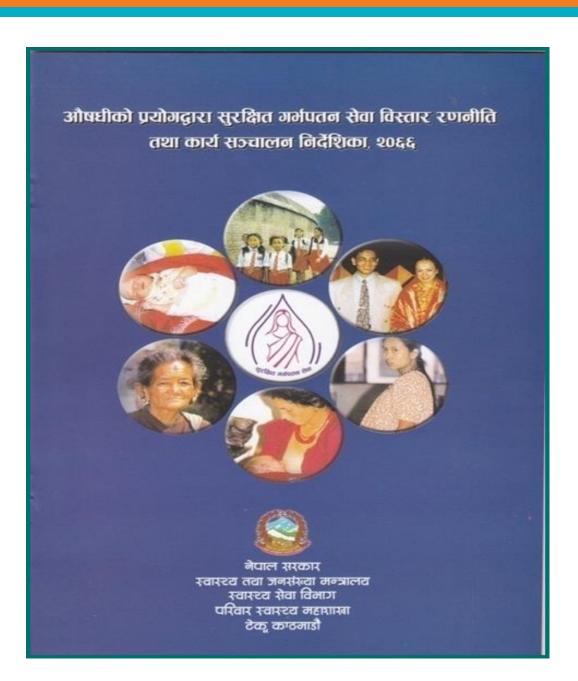
Source: Ipas Nepal database, 2014 (25 district)

## Challenges

- Government transfer of trained providers
- Work load
- Role of program support team
- Expansion to even more remote areas
- Strengthening providers support networks

#### Lessons learned

- Task sharing improves accessibility
- Training alone is not sufficient provider support team is necessary
- MA services should be integrated into the existing health system
- Local team must be trained in problem solving approaches and leadership/advocacy
- Assessments are critical to understand the needs prior to introduction of services



"It took three decades to change the [abortion] policy, and we are now witnessing how that policy is being translated into programs. Nepali women today enjoy the reproductive rights that women in many countries in the world are still struggling to gain. There are gaps in implementation, but we are on the right track. Let's hope it will not take another 30 years before every woman in Nepal is fully aware of her reproductive rights and is also able to get access to appropriate quality services on demand and on time."

Hon. Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Member of Parliament, Nepal Keynote address, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 14 August 2014

