

Check your understanding



1 What is the maternal mortality ratio?

Answer [The maternal mortality rate is the ratio of women who die during pregnancy or childbirth per 100 000 live births.]

2 Are high maternal mortality ratios only a problem for developing countries?

Answer [No, even in highly developed countries like the US too many women still die of pregnancy related causes.]

3 Why did the Kenyan government decide to get rid of the delivery fee for public health facilities?

Answer [Because it kept many poor women from delivering in facilities that had trained medical professionals who could help when complications occurred during birth. Instead, many women delivered their babies at home without trained medical help.]

4 What happened when Kenya dropped the delivery fee?

Answer [It increased access to healthcare for poor women, so more poor women delivered their babies in public health facilities than at home, likely increasing their chances of survival.]

5 What did mothers who had babies both before and after the policy change do? And what does this tell us?

Answer [Before, they were more likely to deliver at home than after the policy change. After the delivery fee was removed, more of them gave birth at public health facilities. We credited the policy change for this, because normally you would expect more experienced mothers to be more likely to give birth at home than at a medical facility rather than vice versa.]