

World Patient Safety Day 2025: Safe Care for Every Newborn and Every Child

World Patient Safety Day is observed on 17 September each year with the objectives of increasing public awareness and engagement, enhancing global understanding, and spurring global solidarity and action to promote patient safety. Each year a campaign is launched on a selected patient safety-related theme. The overall goal of the World Patient Safety Day is to improve patient safety at the point of care.¹

Unfortunately, around 800 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In addition, around 6700 newborns die every day, amounting to 47% of all under-5 deaths. Moreover, about 2 million babies are stillborn every year, with over 40% occurring during labour. Women and newborns are exposed to a significant burden of risks and harm due to unsafe care especially in the low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The majority of stillbirths and maternal and newborn deaths are avoidable through the provision of safe and quality care by skilled healthcare professionals working in supportive environments.^{2,3} To ensure standard care and safety, the WHO set the following five goals in this regard:²

- Goal 1 : Reduce practices that are unnecessary and harmful to women and newborns during childbirth
- Goal 2 : Strengthen capacity and support of health workers for safe maternal and newborn care
- Goal 3 : Promote respectful care for safe childbirth
- Goal 4 : Improve safe use of medication and blood transfusion during childbirth
- Goal 5 : Report and analyze safety incidents in childbirth

The Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 recognizes paediatric and newborn safety across multiple strategic objectives which included safe clinical practice, infection prevention and control, emergency obstetric and anaesthesia services,

strengthening immunization programme, enhancing health workforce competencies, engaging patients and their families and integrating patient safety education in curriculum.³ It also calls for patient safety education, including a dedicated curriculum for older school-aged children, equipping them with essential knowledge on safety principles and self-advocacy in health care.^{2,3} Besides, WHO calls for urgent action to eliminate avoidable harm in paediatric and newborn care as per under the slogan ‘Patient safety from the start!’.² To address the challenges to current scenarios of patient safety specific to newborn and child healthcare comprehensive efforts are required in some key areas, such as safe childbirth and postnatal care, medication safety, diagnostic safety, immunization safety, infection prevention and early recognition of clinical deterioration.^{3–5}

World Patient Safety Day 2025 aims to drive meaningful improvements and reaffirm every child’s right to safe and quality care. Since safe care for patients is a fundamental priority in healthcare, many newborns and children remain vulnerable to patient safety risks especially in the developing countries. Bangladesh is not an exception to this. Although the reported incidence of adverse events in newborns and children receiving medical care varies, studies suggest that adverse events occur across all care settings, with higher risks in intensive care units. To bring attention to this critical issue, ‘Safe care for every newborn and every child’ has been selected as the theme for World Patient Safety Day 2025, emphasizing the need for stronger measures to protect children from preventable harm in health care. Strengthening safety in paediatric and newborn care is essential to achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goal 3.2 target of ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under the age of five. It also aligns with the ‘Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health 2016–2030’ with agreement by the Member States of the United Nations on an ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; it is time to build on the momentum

achieved over the past five years and make effective and successful progress in the next five years.¹⁻³

In modern healthcare, it is crucial to recognize patient safety as a global health priority, and also an essential component of strengthening health systems for moving towards universal health coverage even in low- and middle-income countries.⁶ By prioritizing child-centred safety, we can save lives and strengthen lifelong health outcomes. This is a call to action on implementation of stronger clinical safety standards, better training for healthcare workers, and more effective systems for reporting. As physicians, we must advocate patient safety and maintain the highest possible standard of patient care despite our limited resources and capacities.

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