



THE CENTRALITY OF MIDWIVES FOR MATERNAL SURVIVAL

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**AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
ON TASK SHIFTING TO NON-PHYSICIAN
CLINICIANS**

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AMDD
Averting Maternal
Death and Disability



Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

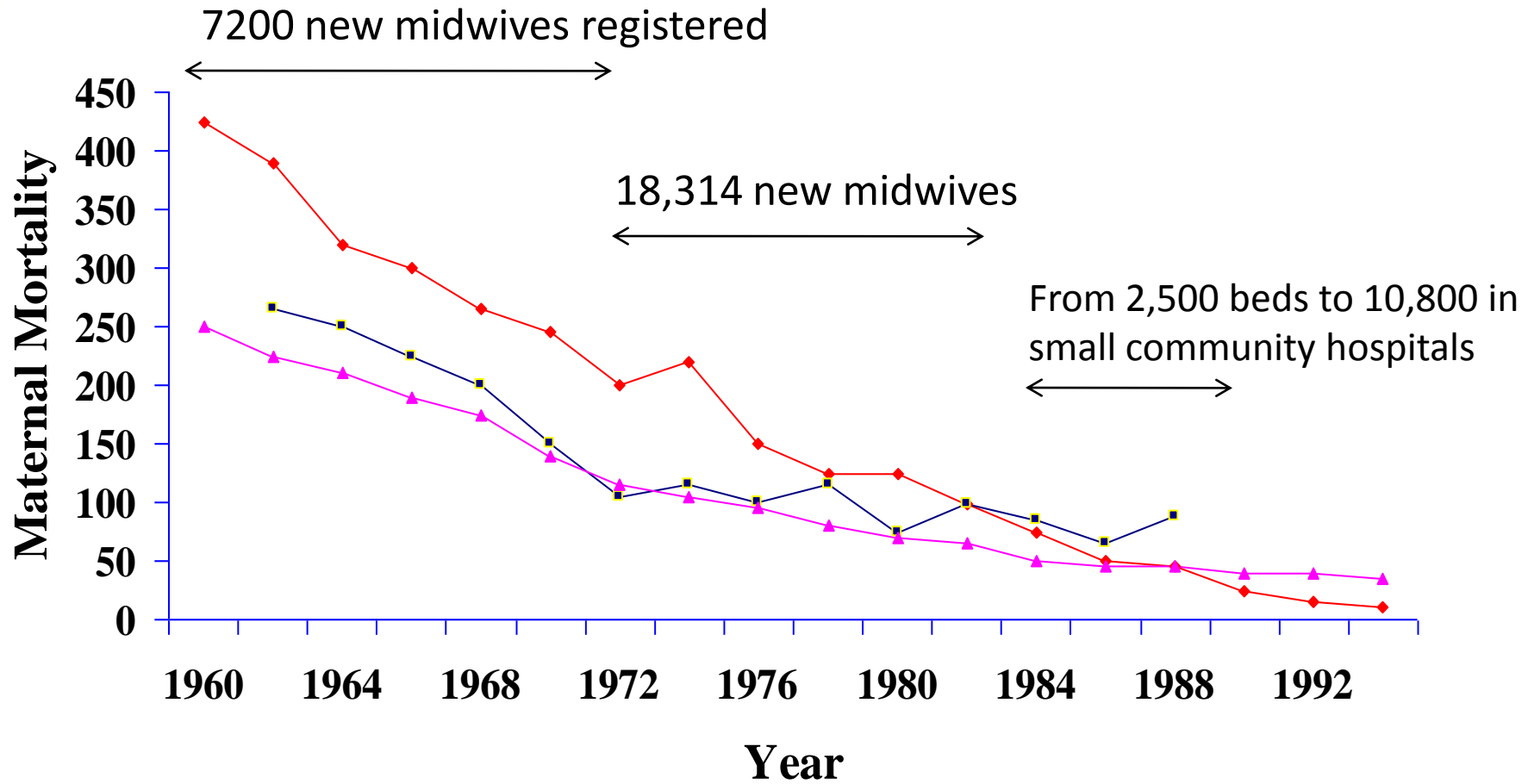


The Centrality of the Midwife for Maternal Survival

Press release by UNFPA and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) on International Midwives Day, 5 May 2006

1. Evidence shows that midwives are vital to reducing the estimated 529,000 maternal deaths and 8 million illnesses that occur each year
2. Addressing the shortage of midwives through education, training and deployment in underserved areas would bring us much closer to achieving MDG 5

Maternal Mortality since the 1960s in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand



—◆— Thailand —■— Sri Lanka —▲— Malaysia



Strategies for Maternal Survival

- Political decision to professionalize midwifery
- Removal of discriminatory regulations
- Shift from: training high numbers of multipurpose health workers to smaller number of specialized facility-based, professional and skilled maternal health providers
- Support infrastructure to include capability to refer and manage complications



Major Questions

1. Who are the health professionals in the maternal health team?
2. At what level of the health system are they available?
3. What competencies are imperative for the midwives?
4. At what level should basic emergency obstetric functions be available?



Who are the Health Professionals in the Maternal Health Team to Provide EmOC?

- Medical Doctors/Specialists
- Clinical Officers/Health Officers
- **Midwives**
- Nurses
- Other Health Workers
(e.g. anesthesiologists, laboratory technicians)



Continuum of Care: Midwife as Lynchpin

Reproductive Health

Family Planning
+
Pregnancy/Childbirth/Postpartum
+
EmOC

Health System

Community ↔ Health Centre ↔ Hospital



The Centrality of Midwife

1. Midwifery is a specialized profession
2. The midwife is the most important link in the team both at health centre and hospital level
3. She/he needs to be respected for her/his role

Quote: Accelerated Health Officer, June 2009



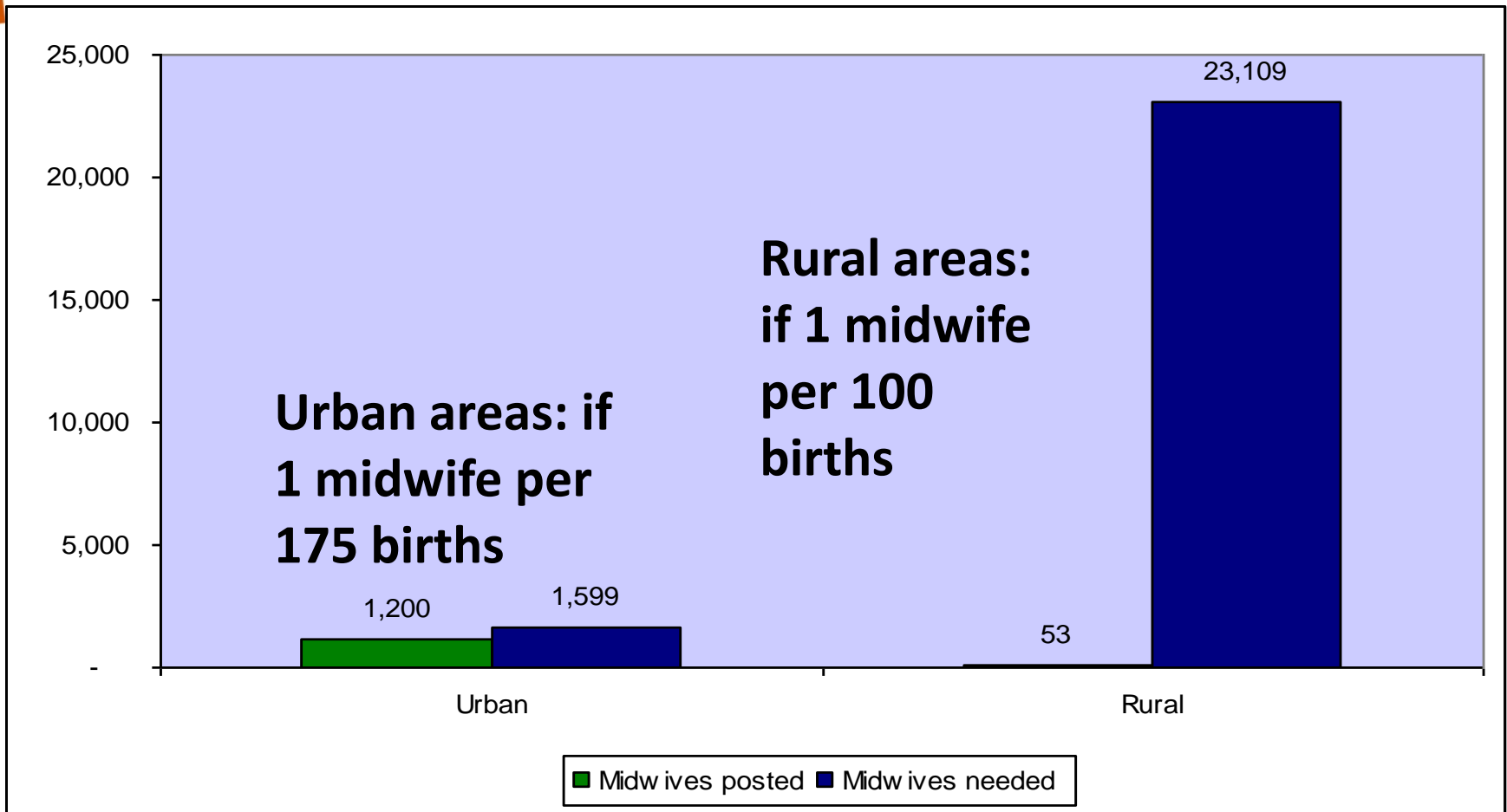
At What Level of the Health System are Midwives Available?

Percent of Facilities with Various Team Configurations

Team Configuration	Health Centre	Hospital
Doctor- Midwife -HO	4%	56%
Midwife -Nurse-HO	43%	62%

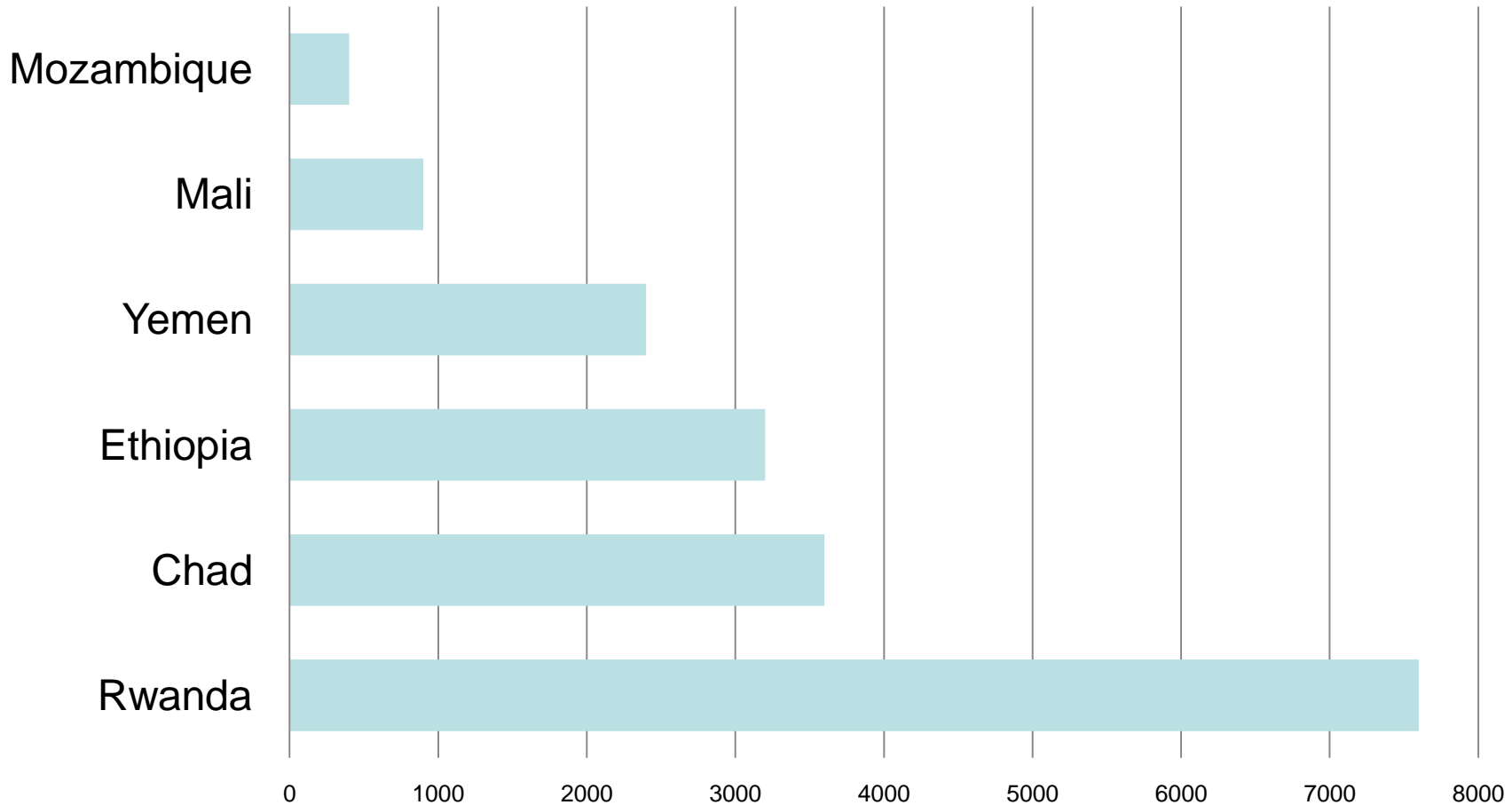
Source: FMOH Ethiopia 2008

Demand for Midwives



Source: FMOH, Ethiopia, 2008

Midwife to Birth Ratio in Selected Countries



Adapted from 2006 WHO World Health Report

What Competencies are Imperative for the Midwives?

- **The midwife's sphere of practice reflects the continuum of care**
- **It must include basic emergency obstetric care**





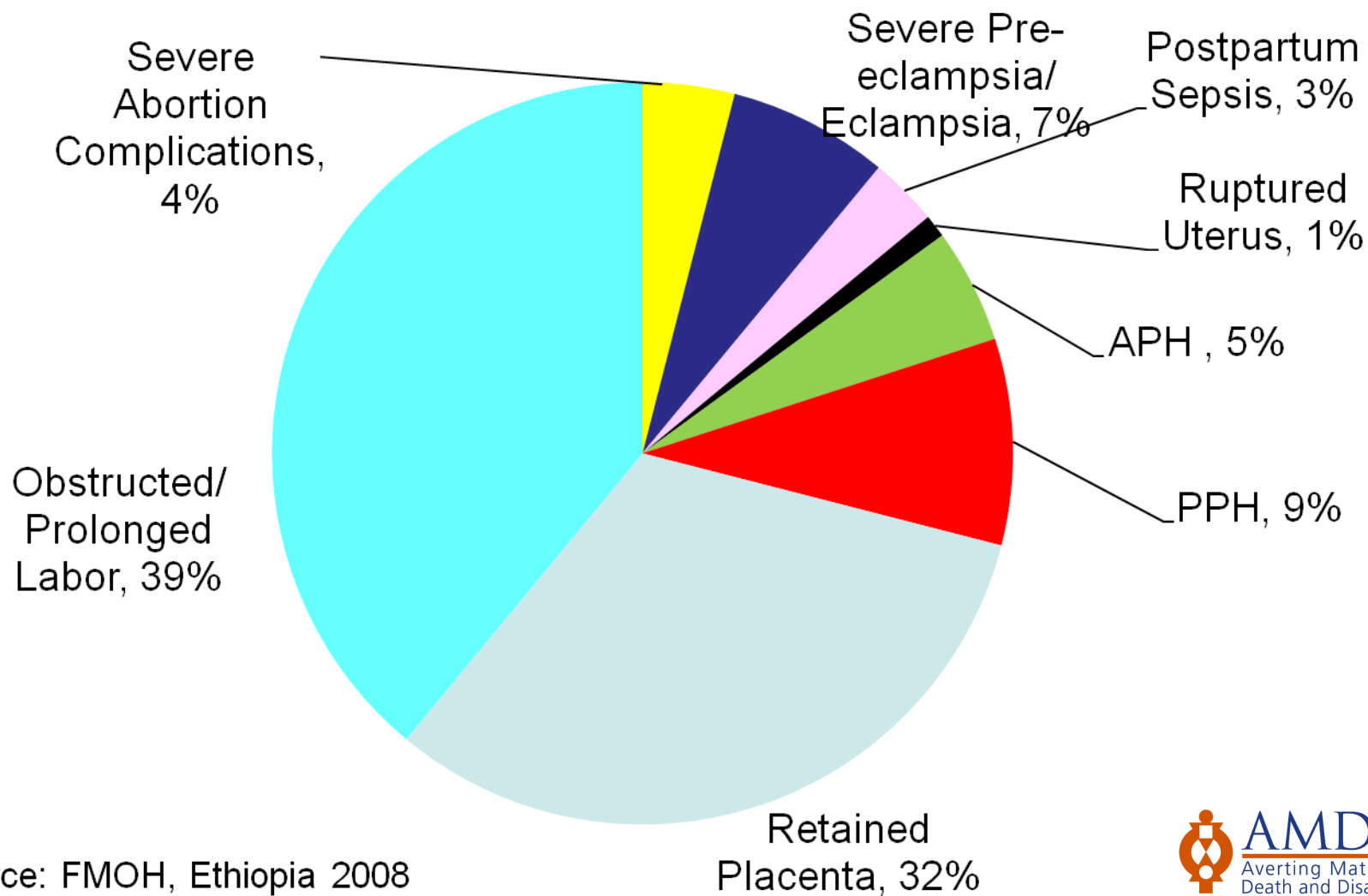
The Centrality of the Midwife

- **70% of maternal deaths are due to five major complications**
- **The majority occur during labour, delivery and the postpartum period**
- **Most cannot be predicted but ALL can be managed**



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Direct Obstetric Complications in Health Centres: 2007-2008 (Total=9,299)



Source: FMOH, Ethiopia 2008

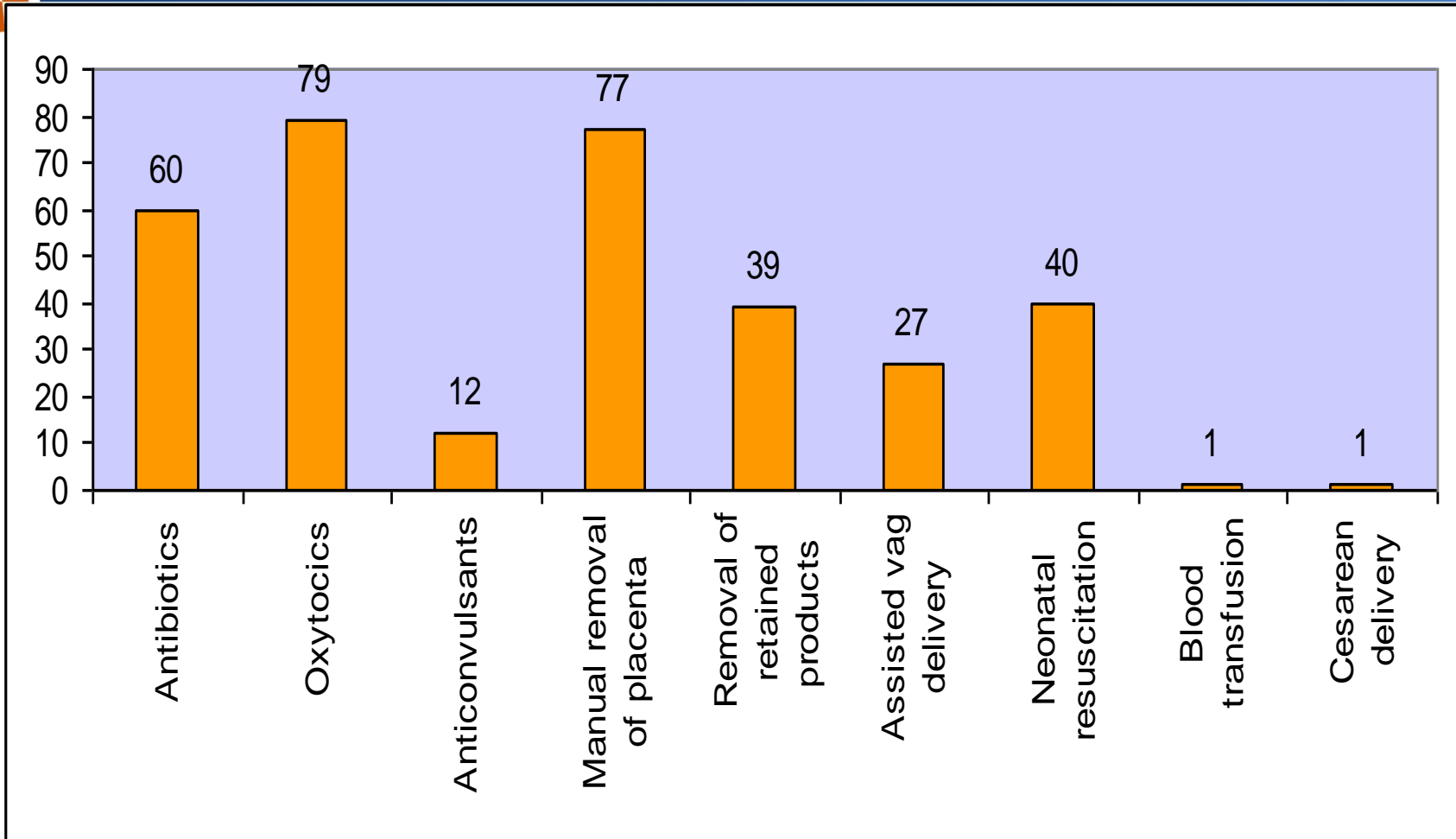
EmONC Signal Functions

1. Parenteral antibiotics
2. Parenteral oxytocics
3. Parenteral anticonvulsants
4. Manual removal of the placenta
5. Removal of retained products
6. Assisted or instrumental vaginal delivery
7. Neonatal resuscitation
8. Blood transfusion
9. Cesarean delivery

Basic

Comprehensive

Percentage of Health Centers that Performed the Signal Functions (N=638)



Source: FMOH 2009



Going to Scale with Midwives

The New **Midwives Programme** (Feb 2008):

- Jointly executed by UNFPA and ICM
- Jointly funded by Sweden, UNFPA and other contributors to the Maternal Health Thematic Fund
- Goal: To build national capacity to increase skilled care for all pregnant women by scaling up the number and capacity of midwives



Priority Countries

The UNFPA Africa Regional Office has identified 9 priority countries in Africa for the first wave of this programme:

- **4 Anglophone countries:**

Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia

- **5 Francophone countries:**

Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, and Madagascar

- **From the Arab States:**

Sudan and Djibouti



“At this defining moment in history, we must be ambitious. Our actions must be as urgent as the need, and on the same scale.”

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General in 2005

