

EXPANDING CHOICE, PROTECTING QUALITY: CLINICAL QUALITY REPORT 2022





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INTRODUCTION

FROM THE GLOBAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR

As the famous quote goes, “quality means doing it right when no one is looking”. Anyone familiar with clinical quality assurance knows that ensuring the quality of clinical services is no small feat, especially as the scale of those services grows. At MSI Reproductive Choices we never compromise on the quality of our services or the safety of our clients. In 2022, we proudly provided reproductive choices to over 21 million clients across 37 countries, preventing more than 14 million unintended pregnancies and averting over 7 million unsafe abortions.

Behind these impressive numbers are over 13,000 dedicated clinicians who worked tirelessly to deliver these services. They not only adhered to MSI’s renowned clinical standards but also used medicines that meet our strict product quality guidelines. Whenever clinical incidents occurred, they promptly reported them so that everyone at MSI could learn and improve the millions of services we provide in the future. As we celebrate another year of providing essential reproductive health services, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of these amazing clinicians.

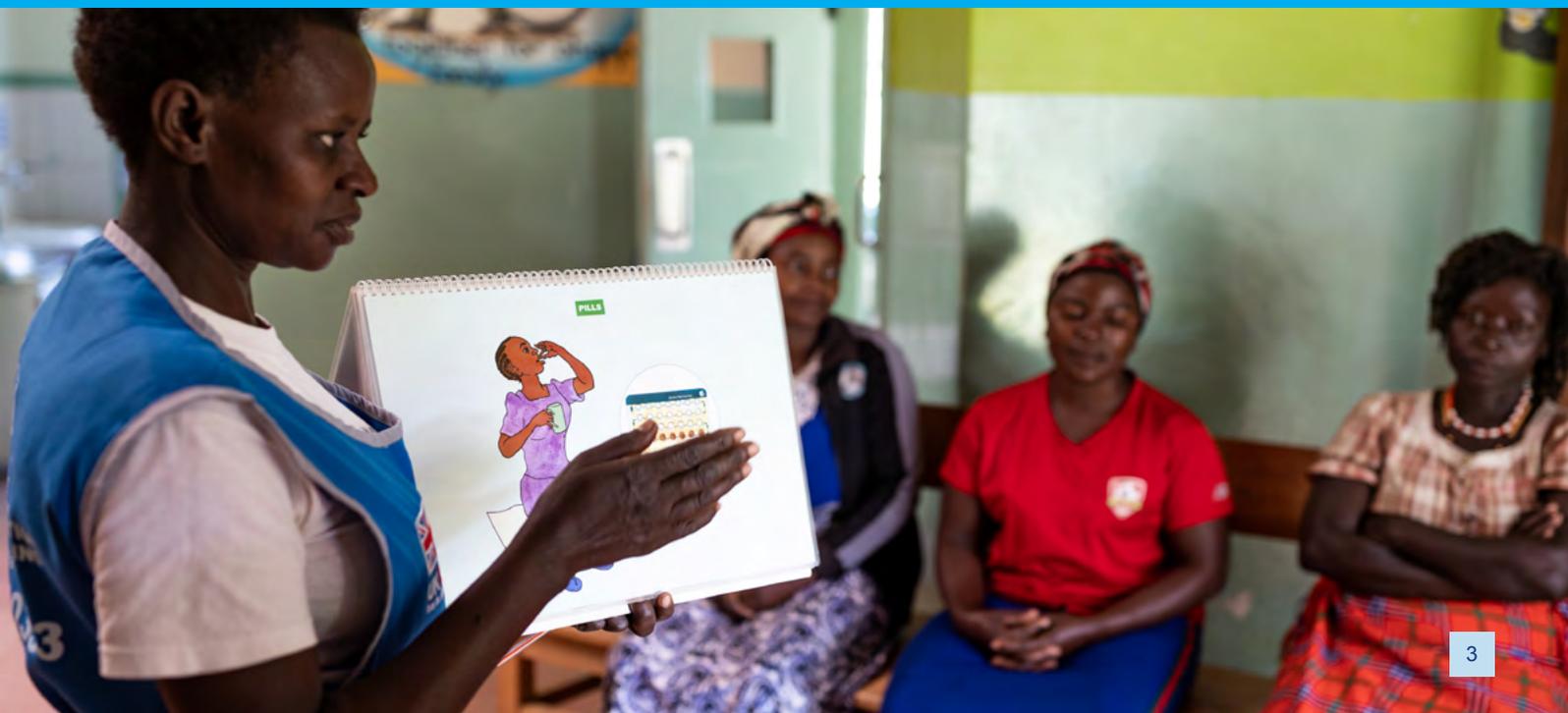
I also want to express my sincere appreciation for the hundreds of clinicians who make up our clinical supervisory teams in the countries we operate in. These fantastic teams carried out over 6,000 clinical assessments of the facilities where our services are provided, evaluated the clinical competencies of more than 90,000 clinicians, and facilitated third-party clinical assessments of over 750 facilities in our country programmes. These numbers only scratch the surface of the huge amount of quality assurance activities that took place day in and day out to maintain the clinical standards that allowed us to offer safe care to those 21 million clients.

Setting clinical standards is the easier part. Creating an organisational culture that respects and upholds those standards, even when no one is looking, is much harder. That takes years of hard work from thousands of passionate clinicians and leaders. As MSI continues to expand, we remain committed to ensuring that our growth never comes at the expense of clinical standards or client safety. Every single client who turns to MSI deserves the same level of care that you and I would expect for ourselves. We strive not only to meet but also to exceed their expectations, and as an organisation, we are dedicated to surpassing those expectations every single day.

Dr Dhammika Perera, MBBS MPH FFPH PhD
Global Medical Director

AS MSI CONTINUES TO EXPAND, WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT OUR GROWTH NEVER COMES AT THE EXPENSE OF CLINICAL STANDARDS OR CLIENT SAFETY.

DR DHAMMIKA PERERA MBBS MPH FFPH PHD



INTRODUCTION

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It is the quality of our clinical services that sets us apart and allows us to make a positive impact on the lives of millions of clients. We take pride in the fact that in 2022 alone, we provided reproductive choices to over 21 million clients, preventing countless unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

The journey of maintaining these high standards is not always easy. It requires continuous effort, dedication, and a willingness to hold ourselves accountable. We must be honest with ourselves and acknowledge when we fall short of standards, so that we can learn and improve for the benefit of our clients.

Each member of MSI plays a vital role in delivering safe and effective care, and I am so grateful for their commitment. Their dedication to upholding our standards is truly inspiring.

As we continue to grow and expand our reach, let us never lose sight of the importance of accountability and honesty. It is easy to set clinical standards, but the true test lies in creating

a culture where these standards are respected and upheld consistently. It is a responsibility that falls on each and every one of us, from clinicians to organisational leaders, to foster an environment where honesty and accountability thrive.

Our clients place their trust in us. They deserve the highest level of care, and it is our duty to meet and exceed their expectations. Let us always strive for excellence, not only in the services we provide but also in the way we hold ourselves accountable to the clinical standards we have set. Together, we will continue to make a lasting impact and empower individuals to make choices that shape their own lives.

Frank Braeken
Chair of the Board of Trustees





2022: CLINICAL QUALITY IN NUMBERS

**133 EXTERNAL CLINICAL
QUALITY ASSESSMENTS
CONDUCTED COVERING 728
SITES AND 32 SUPPORT OFFICES**



**892 SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
PRODUCTS AND 475 ANCILLARY
MEDICINES QUALITY ASSURED**



**8,358 INTERNAL
CLINICAL QUALITY
ASSESSMENTS
CONDUCTED**



**93,131 COMPETENCY
ASSESSMENTS CARRIED OUT**



**12,999 PROVIDERS
COMPETENCY ASSESSED FOR
EVERY SERVICE THEY PROVIDE**



**16,720 DELIVERIES AND
121,954 ANTENATAL CARE
VISITS ACROSS 32 MATERNITY
FACILITIES**



GLOBAL STRATEGY THROUGH A LOCAL LENS: CREATING A HOLISTIC VIEW OF CLINICAL QUALITY

Last year, 133 external clinical quality assessments were conducted by our network of regional medical advisors and peer assessors. A total of 728 clinical service provision sites and 32 support offices were assessed, either by MSI's team of regional medical advisors or an experienced clinician from one of our country programmes. All aspects of service provision are scored against a standardised, channel-specific checklist covering clinical governance, provider competency and skill, counselling, pain management and infection prevention principles.

In parallel, just shy of 13,000 clinical providers were competency assessed in every service they provided, including medical emergency readiness. Again, standardised, service-specific checklists are used to assess provider competency, ensuring that all MSI clinicians adhere to the same levels of care across the globe.

As part of MSI's 2030 strategy, we measure standards of client care using 3 metrics: our Abortion Quality Index, our Client-Centred Care metric, and our Clinical Quality metric. The latter measures overall clinical quality of care, pulling and pooling scores from the activities detailed above. This means taking into account data on model areas observed during an external clinical quality assessment (a clinical area such as clinical governance, infection prevention or service provision scoring >90%) as well as competency assessment coverage across the various MSI channels and programmes.

A points score is attributed to each service delivery channel based on the following data points:

- % model areas as seen in the clinical quality assessment
- % providers competency assessed in the previous 12 months for every service they provide
- Support office clinical quality assessment performance

A maximum of 18 points can be awarded, with 16 and above labelled "gold standard". By the end of 2022, 10 programmes already fell into this category.

Mongolia	18
Mexico	18
Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India	18
Pakistan	17
Population Health Services India	17
Myanmar	17
Nepal	17
Senegal	16
Nigeria	16
Afghanistan	16

Not only does the metric help us to establish a "gold standard" of clinical quality in service provision, it also allows our programmes to identify areas requiring additional attention, to ensure client safety and effectiveness of services. With a further nine countries at 14 points or above, we are confident of achieving our goal of 100% of programmes hitting the gold standard by 2030.

OUR 2030 COMMITMENT: 100% OF MSI COUNTRY PROGRAMMES WILL ACHIEVE "GOLD STANDARD" IN OUR CLINICAL QUALITY METRIC

SPOTLIGHT ON: MEXICO

Having achieved "gold standard" in the clinical quality metric for the past two years running, and hitting the top score of 18 in 2022, Mexico is well placed to speak about maintaining clinical quality standards. Their support office achieved model site status in 2022, and performance in external clinical quality audits was excellent, with almost every clinical area receiving the highest score possible.

Competency assessment coverage has remained high over the past few years. All providers were competency assessed in every service they provided over the past 12 months, including for high-risk services and medical emergency management. The programme also endorsed three clinical trainers, increasing their in-house training capacity.

The key, says Medical Director Dr. Alfonso Carrera, MD, is effective communication. "We hold monthly face-to-face meetings with the team leaders in Mexico City and remote monthly meetings with the leaders of each centre in other states. The information that is brought to these meetings is shared with the lessons learned in each centre's monthly meetings. We maintain a schedule of clinical quality internal audits to look for areas of opportunity and general action plans for improvement."

Of course, there is always room for improvement, and Dr Carrera and the team instil this attitude in their team members. "We hold follow-up meetings every two weeks with management teams, in which supervisors and administrators actively participate. We have a no-blame culture to identify areas of opportunity in patient safety, and we provide feedback based on responses received from client exit surveys, which monitor customer satisfaction."



DRIVING THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE FORWARD

The client sits at the heart of MSI's service provision. All of our clinical quality assurance systems are designed to lead to a positive and respectful experience, in which clients' needs are addressed in the most efficient and effective way.

It is this professional attitude to client experience and passion for clinical excellence which best represents how our teams exceeded expectations in 2022. Here are just a few examples of how our teams went above and beyond to ensure a positive experience for every client:

- A number of in-country teams started using digital tools to collect client feedback, allowing for real-time visualisation and analysis of the data
- Other teams proactively organised client-centred care committees, dedicated to disseminating and discussing client feedback, and ensuring that improvements are swiftly implemented
- We continued to improve on client experiences of pain, piloting new options for pain management for safe abortion care and conducting deep dive assessments of facilities' pain management options
- Through our centres, several countries focused on expanding their range of services, launching packages to care for clients through their entire reproductive life cycle

Finally, particular attention was paid to improving the journey of our maternity service clients in 2022. The case study (right) takes a deep dive into the roll out of MSI's respectful maternity care, and how we are supporting women to have positive pregnancy and birthing experiences right from their first antenatal care visit.



SPOTLIGHT ON: RESPECTFUL MATERNITY CARE

The absence of maternal and foetal deaths no longer constitutes the sole marker of high-quality maternal healthcare. The World Health Organization recognizes women's experience of maternal healthcare as a crucial determinant of health outcomes.

The term "obstetric violence" covers a wide range of experiences which take choice and autonomy away from the woman. This can include everything from dismissive attitudes to truly aggressive behaviours by healthcare providers. But it also includes (sometimes routine) practices such as not allowing birth companions, performing unnecessary vaginal exams and episiotomies or separating mother and baby.

Negative birthing experiences deny women their bodily autonomy: their fundamental right to decide what happens to their body, make choices for her pregnancy and delivery, the right to informed consent, the right to privacy, and the right to equal treatment. These negative experiences during pregnancy and childbirth can inflict lasting damage and emotional trauma on women experiencing them, resulting in higher rates of postpartum depression and anxiety, bonding, and breastfeeding difficulties that impact the health of the newborn and the mother.

By contrast, respectful maternity care is care organised for and provided to all women in a manner that maintains and respects her dignity, privacy, and confidentiality. It ensures freedom of harm and mistreatment and enables informed choice and continuous support during prenatal care, labour, childbirth and postpartum. For example, it might include allowing different birth positions, or performing humanized Caesarean sections in which the patient can be accompanied by her companion of choice, and she is allowed skin-to-skin contact with her baby as she would have during a vaginal birth.

MSI operates 32 high-quality maternity hospitals in seven countries. While MSI's staff were already committed to providing a safe experience for women, a unique new workshop focussing on respectful maternity care was rolled out in 2022, encouraging medical providers to put themselves in clients' shoes.

Using exercises inspired by values clarification and attitudes transformation (VCAT) workshops, the training helps providers think about what would give them a negative or positive experience through role play, case scenarios, and other exercises. By exploring the provider's underlying beliefs and attitudes, these trainings encourage lasting change.

Piloted in a Uganda hospital in July 2022, the training was launched to all maternity and obstetric leads in October during a week-long maternity workshop in Nairobi. To date, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Providers from across MSI's maternity programmes came away surprised and inspired by the way the exercises made them think critically about their own practices.

The training will continue to be rolled out to all 32 MSI maternity care facilities in 2023, along with an evaluation of its impact on providers and clients.



WHO ASSESSES THE ASSESSORS?

BUILDING THE QUALITY OF SELF-REPORTED DATA

Over the past few years we have developed several innovative ways of gathering data at a distance. However, as our use of remote data collection increases, so does the need to ensure the quality and integrity of the data.

Our on-the-ground assessors for both clinical quality internal audits and competency assessments are an integral part of our clinical governance activities, and so it is crucial that they receive the training and resources that they need to do this job well.

In 2022, 24 peer assessors were trained in honing their clinical quality assessment skills, strengthening their ability to conduct internal audits in their home programmes. Nine new master trainers were also endorsed, subsequently allowing them to train new clinical trainers and increase clinical training capacity across the partnership. To encourage continuous learning in these areas, online refresher trainings have also been developed for these assessors to re-test their knowledge annually, and gives a record of learning that can be cross checked against documentation and internal databases to ensure that the right people are conducting assessments across the partnership.



SPOTLIGHT ON: PAKISTAN

At the end of 2022, we conducted a triangulation exercise to test the reliability of self-reported competency assessment levels with observations made during clinical quality assessments.

Our programme in Pakistan, MSS – a Pakistani NGO supported by MSI, showed almost perfect alignment between their own competency assessment checklists and evaluation of services as seen during external assessment. Dr Tasneem Fatima, Pakistan's Director of Health Services, explains how cross-team collaboration and implementation of clinical governance systems helped them to achieve this:

“Our programme’s ability to sustain quality is aided by several elements. Firstly, we ensure the active participation of the clinical quality team in the annual business planning process. This ensures sufficient budget allocation for the implementation of our clinical quality assurance activities.

“We then host monthly coordination meetings with service delivery channel leads, where we share clinical quality assessment and competency assessment findings to create an enabling environment and give a better understanding of clinical governance.

“So that our staff have the capacity to conduct thorough, accurate assessments, we recruit clinical officers at district level.

The presence of these clinical officers who are also endorsed clinical trainers provides enormous support in conducting assessments and addressing clinical quality issues on a timely basis. We also rely on technical assistance from our Regional Medical Advisor to build the capacity of our clinical trainers. Areas for development are identified and addressed on a quarterly basis in capacity building workshops. We make sure that all our trainers’ qualifications are kept up-to-date, and where gaps in their knowledge are identified, we ensure that they are sent to centres with high client volumes to hone their skills.

“Finally, information sharing and accuracy contributes hugely to the quality of our assessments. My team and I constantly make sure that trainers are promptly updated on new information. As a result, there is no ambiguity or confusion around clinical standards or processes, and the team is kept motivated. Our internal databases are updated frequently and reviewed monthly, which informs the scheduling of our assessments.

“These initiatives improve and maintain the skills, attitude and knowledge of our assessors, which contributes to the quality of our assessments, meaning that their findings match those of external assessments.”

MY TEAM AND I CONSTANTLY MAKE SURE THAT TRAINERS ARE PROMPTLY UPDATED ON NEW INFORMATION. AS A RESULT, THERE IS NO AMBIGUITY OR CONFUSION AROUND CLINICAL STANDARDS OR PROCESSES, AND THE TEAM IS KEPT MOTIVATED.

DR TASNEEM FATIMA MBBS MBA MPH MCPS

2023 AND BEYOND: EXPANDING CHOICE WHILST PROTECTING QUALITY

As we move into 2023 and beyond, continuing to better understand and enhance the client journey will remain a strong focus for us. We will expand our use of digital tools globally, to collect and analyse client feedback on a larger scale than ever before and put actions in place that will improve the client experience. Work is also ongoing on a digital system that will guide our clinicians through the procedures they perform, ensuring that every step is done right while capturing service data automatically so that clinicians can divert the time they spend on writing clinical notes to better serving our clients.

As our social marketing activities expand, we will continue assuring the quality of all medical products and devices that are sold across MSI. We are constantly looking for new high-quality suppliers, with work currently underway to quality assure new contraceptive implant and medical abortifacient products, to name a few. Continuing to research emerging pharmaceutical companies

and supporting good quality manufacturing capacity in the countries we work in is crucial to expanding the choice of products available to our clients at an acceptable price point.

Finally, we will continue to assess the quality and integrity of our clinical data through spot checks and regular data triangulations. We recently updated our clinical competency assessment checklists to verify that assessors are up to task, increasing their accountability. Self-reported data on both competency and clinical quality internal audits has given us better visibility over assessment per assessor ratios than ever before, meaning that for the first time, we can calculate the workload of our clinical assessors so that adequate human resources for quality assurance activities are ensured in every MSI country programme.

Our commitment to quality will always remain at the forefront of our work. Through 2023 and beyond, we will do all we can so that every single MSI client receives services that exceed all expectations.



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