



The 2014 United Nations Human Development Report, which measures the key dimensions of a population's quality of life, ranked Afghanistan in 171st place out of 188. Infant mortality in Afghanistan is high, with around 70 deaths per 1000 live births. Meanwhile, the maternal mortality rate is 400 per 100,000 live births and only 2 live births in 5 are attended during delivery by skilled health personnel.

Over the past forty years Afghanistan has been ravaged by conflict, causing high numbers of civilian casualties, many of whom were maimed by explosive devices and landmines. Currently, the Government only controls a small part of the territory; many of the southern and central provinces experience fighting and bombing on a daily basis. The resulting instability in the country has also produced large numbers of refugees.

In addition, recent estimates indicate that in Afghanistan over 9 million people have limited or no access to health facilities, which are insufficient to meet the needs of the population. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are only two doctors, five nurses and midwives, and less than one pharmacist per 10,000 inhabitants. By comparison, in Italy, there are 38 doctors, 54 nurses and midwives, and 11 pharmacists per 10,000 people.

Increasing episodes of violence against healthcare - 119 only in 2016 - produce effects that extend far beyond the moment of the attack and its immediate aftermath. Attacks on medical facilities not only affect the personnel and infrastructure directly targeted, but also the population depending on them for receiving adequate health care.

EMERGENCY began working in Afghanistan in 1999 by converting former barracks into a surgical centre for war victims in Anabah, in the mountainous Panjshir region. Over time, admission criteria expanded and now includes general and trauma surgery, internal medicine and paediatrics, making the Centre the referral hospital for the entire Panjshir valley.

In 2003, EMERGENCY opened a Maternity Centre next to the existing hospital. The Maternity Centre provides gynaecological, obstetric and neonatal assistance to the local population. Initially limited to the Panjshir Valley, the catchment area of the Centre gradually expanded to the provinces of Parwan, Kapisa, and also the capital city, Kabul, reaching out to more than 1 million people.

The Maternity Centre, with its A&E, guarantees surgical and medical assistance to hospitalised patients 24/7. The outpatient department is open from 8am to 4pm, six days per week.

The Centre delivers up to 17 babies every day and, with 596 deliveries, December 2016 marked a new record in the hospital history. Additionally, the number of babies treated in our neonatal intensive care unit remains high: there were over 2,000 admissions in 2016, with a monthly average of over 180 admissions.

In view of the increased activities of the Centre and in order to respond to the increased needs of the local population, EMERGENCY decided to expand the Centre to handle up to 6-7,000 deliveries per year and boost obstetric and neonatal activities. The construction works, which started in September 2015, concluded in December 2016 with the new Centre's inauguration.

The new block has four delivery rooms, two operating rooms, a neonatal intensive and sub-intensive care unit, an intensive care unit for mothers who had complications during delivery, an out-patient department, a gynaecological ward, a follow-up area and a labor room.

The Centre also receives patients referred through EMERGENCY's Primary Healthcare Clinics (PHCs) placed in Panjshir, Parwan and Kapisa provinces. Most PHCs offer an antenatal and postnatal programme thanks to the presence of national midwives. When necessary, women are transferred to the Maternity Centre, where they can be kept under observation or hospitalised according to the severity of their conditions.

In addition to providing training in nursing and midwifery, EMERGENCY's hospital in Anabah has been recognised by the Afghan Ministry of Health as a national training centre for the residency programs in gynaecology. In 2016 four residents worked in the Centre.

Activities: Obstetrics and gynaecology, neonatal care

Facilities: 2 Operating Theatres, Intensive and Sub Intensive Neonatal Care Unit, Intensive Care Unit for mothers, Out-Patients Department, Wards, Nursery, Ultra-sound Room, 4 Delivery rooms, labour room, diagnostic services. The Maternity Centre share technical and auxiliary services with the Surgical and Paediatric Centre.

Capacity: 87 beds (26 for newborn, 61 for mothers)

International staff: 1 coordinator, 1 paediatrician, 2 gynaecologist, 2 midwives, 2 nurses, 1 technician.

National staff: 98 medical and non medical staff

From the beginning of activities to December 2016:

Outpatient consultations: **226,074**

Patients admitted: **53,052**

Surgical operations: **9,702**

Children born in the Centre: **38,767**

From January to December 2016:

Outpatient consultations: **40,508**

Patients admitted: **7,732**

Surgical operations: **1,185**

Children born in the Centre: **6,230**