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**213**     *THE MDGs AND MATERNAL HEALTH OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN GUATEMALA: THE NEED TO INCLUDE EQUITY TARGETS*

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This study used quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics) to analyze the gaps and challenges of the MDGs related to maternal health. Although the indigenous population in Guatemala account for 45% of total population in the country, they suffer poor social indicators to a wider extent than non indigenous population. In this context of social exclusion, there is a need to identify the gaps between subpopulation groups that may be overlooked by aggregated or national targets such as those set by the MDGs. The 'Reproductive Age Mortality Survey' (RAMOS) year 2000, was used to analyze maternal mortality rates (MMR) by ethnicity and educational level. The maternal and child health survey, year 2002, was used to analyze access to obstetric care and other maternal health care services.

**RESULTS**

Although the RAMOS estimated a MMR of 153/100,000 for the entire country, MMR in indigenous women is 3 times more than that in non-indigenous women. In terms of actual deaths counted, 73% of all maternal deaths occurred in indigenous women. In terms of educational level, 94% of all deaths occurred in women (indigenous and non-indigenous) with primary education or less.

Incidence of cesarean sections as an indicator of access to quality of care showed that Only 5% of indigenous women had a delivery by cesarean section where this number was 16% for non indigenous. These figures have remained static for the last 10 years. Provinces with rural indigenous population present up to 30 times more difficulties to reach the network of public health facilities than provinces with urban non-indigenous population. More than 70% of indigenous women deliver at home without the assistance of qualified provider whereas up to 85% of non-indigenous women deliver in a hospital.

**CONCLUSIONS**

There are serious inequities of maternal health outcomes (MMR) and access to obstetric care and other services between indigenous and non-indigenous women in Guatemala. These inequities are not taken into account while setting goals based on national averages and aggregated data. In a context of historical exclusion, MDGs must identify and implement specific targets aimed to reduce inequity gaps. Without the latter, MDGs are contributing to hiding inequities and losing the opportunity to drive resources and efforts towards a wider impact on the health of socially excluded population groups.