

Maintaining safe functioning of maternal and newborn services during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Background

- Disruption of essential health services worldwide across major health areas due to COVID-19
- Disruption of maternal and child health services → reduced access and utilization → complications and death
- Decline of 10% in service coverage during pregnancy and for newborns could result in **additional 28 000 maternal and 168 000 newborn deaths**
- Demands of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic vs the need to maintain the delivery of essential health

Disruption of essential services across the globe

Pulse survey on continuity of essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic

94% of responding countries (N=135) experienced a disruption to some extent



9% of countries reported disruptions in **75-100%** of services

25% of countries reported disruptions in **50-74%** of services

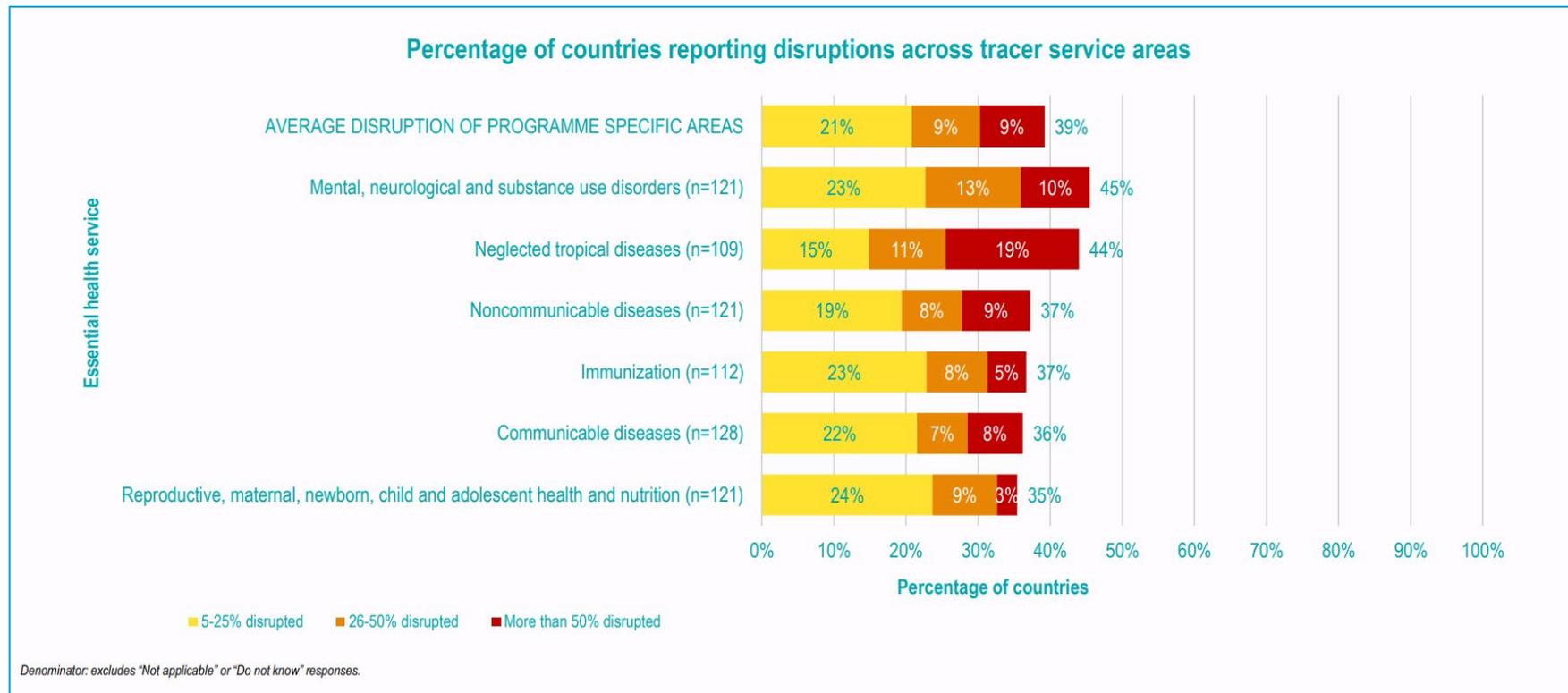
29% of countries reported disruptions in **25-49%** of services

32% of countries reported disruptions in less than **25%** of services

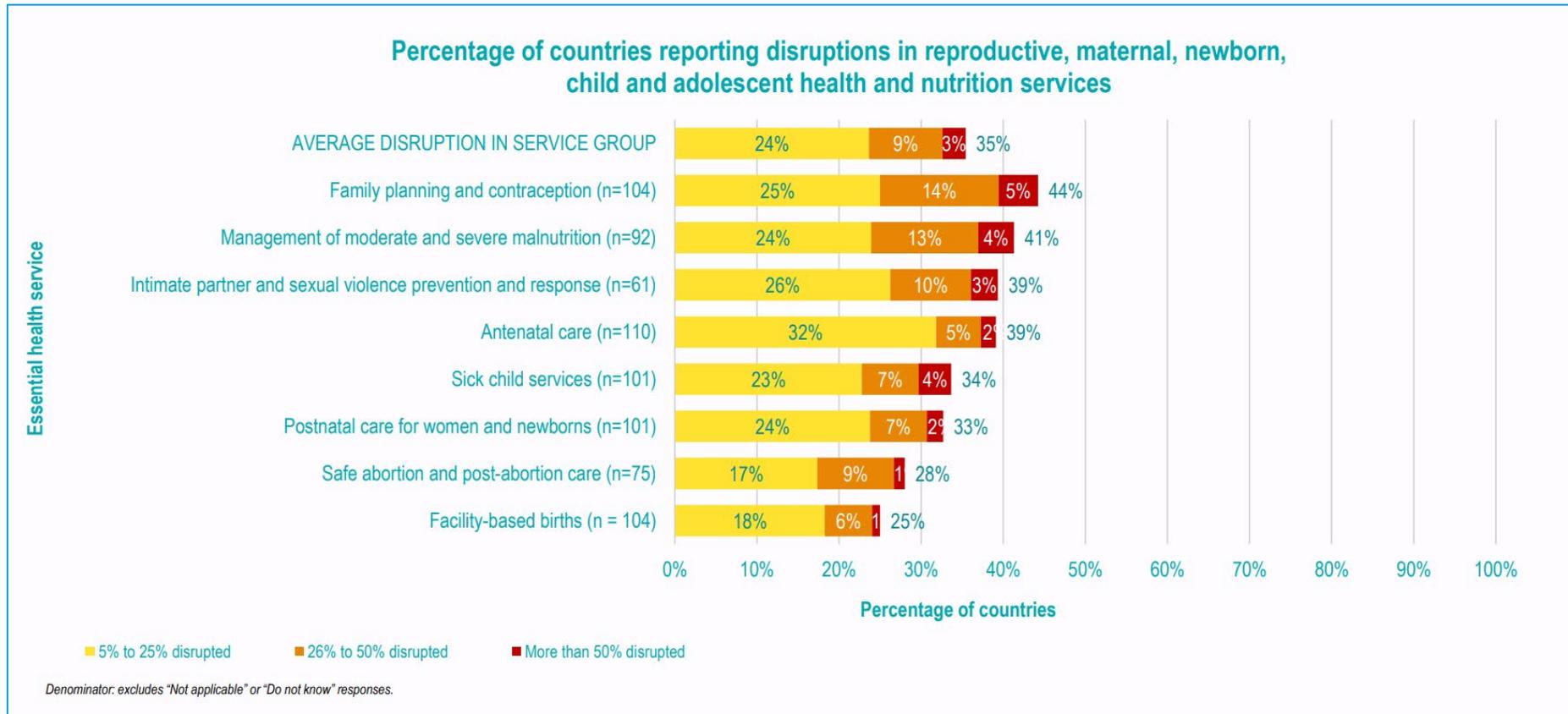
Only **6%** of countries reported **no disruptions**

Disruption of essential services across major health areas

Substantial disruptions span across all major health areas

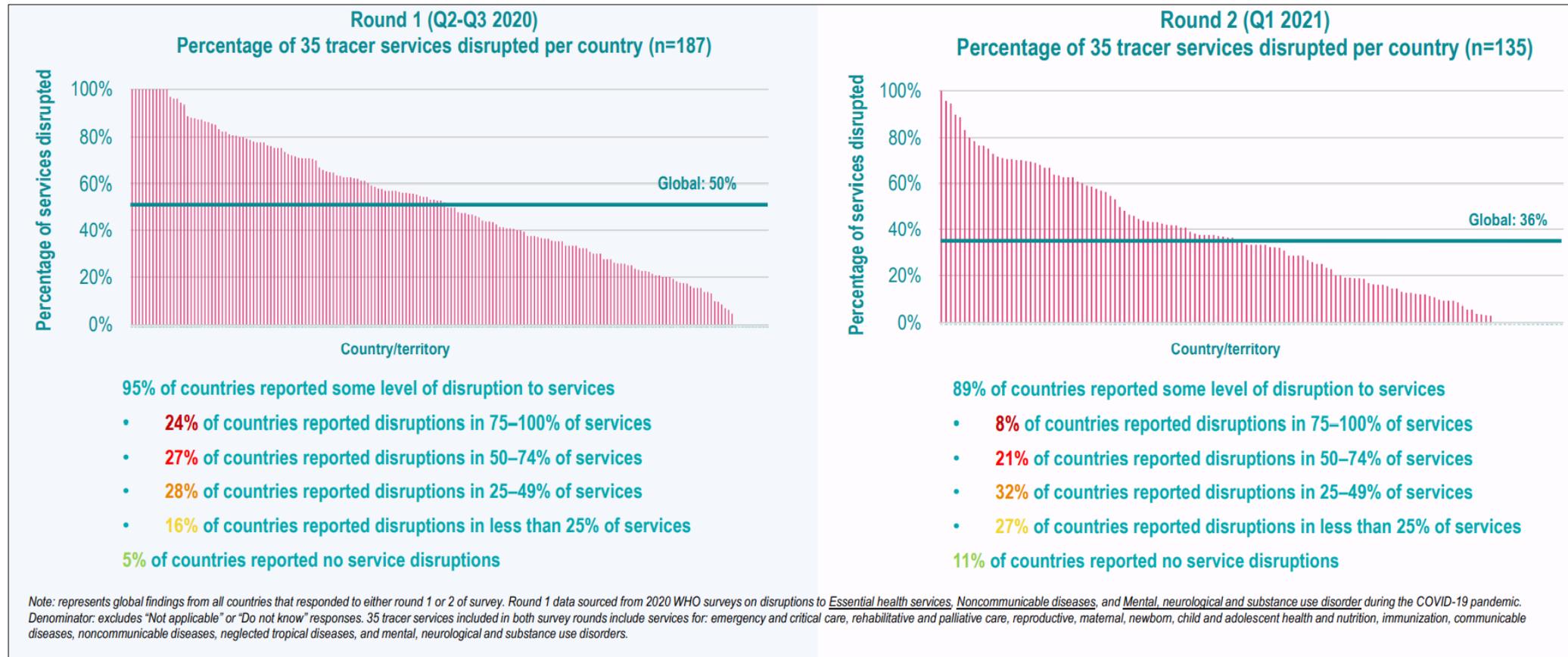


Disruptions in services for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition



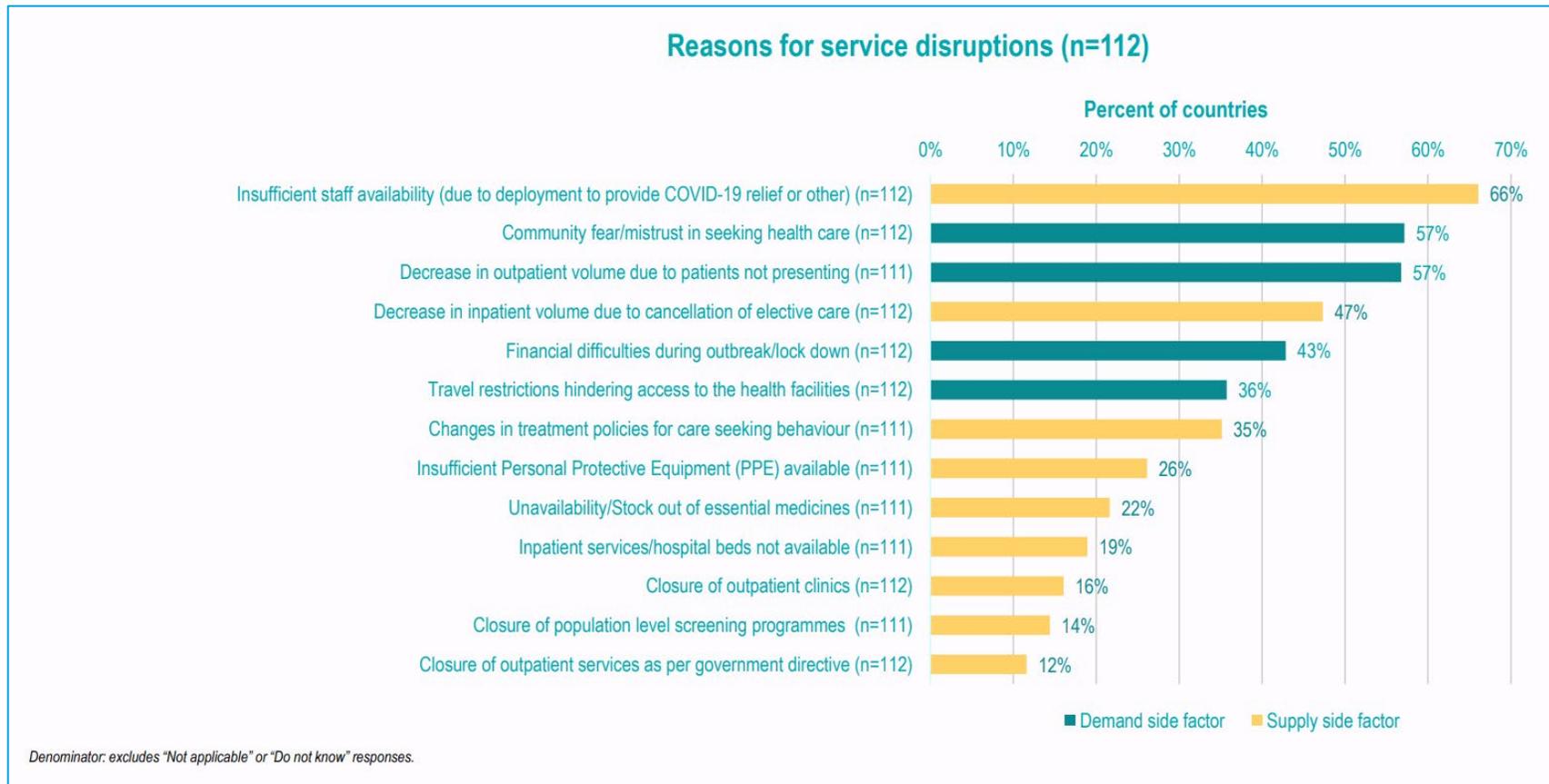
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-EHS-continuity-survey-2021.1>

Positive trend: decrease in reported disruptions compared to 2020



Main causes of disruption

Service disruptions are perceived to be caused by a mix of supply and demand side factors



WHO recommendations

System-wide

- Context considerations and adaptation to changing contexts and needs
- Adjustment of governance and coordination mechanisms and addressing financial barriers to access
- Reconsideration of health workforce capacity
- Optimization of service delivery settings and platforms
- Maintaining the availability of essential medications, equipment and supplies

Maternal and newborn health

- All essential elements of antenatal care (ANC) and postnatal care (PNC)
- Access to skilled care at all times
- Essential commodities and supplies for ANC, childbirth and PNC services

Health worker safety and patient safety

- Synergies between health worker safety and patient safety policies and strategies
- High-reliability systems and organizations (safety culture)
- Safe clinical processes (checklists, tools, guidelines)
- Women's engagement and empowerment
- Health worker protection (physical and biological hazards, mental health)

WHO resources

- Pulse survey on continuity of essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Global results – as of 16 April 2021
- Maintaining essential health services: operational guidance for the COVID-19 context. Interim guidance. 1 June 2020
- Analysing and using routine data to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on essential health services. Practical guide for national and subnational decision-makers. Interim guidance. 14 January 2021.
- Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030
- Charter. Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety. World Patient Safety Day 2020
- World Patient Safety Goals 2020-2021. Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety
- Strengthening infection prevention and control in primary care: a collection of existing standards, measurement and implementation resources
- 1st module of a new training package on IPC in maternal and neonatal care



Launching new technical resources today!



World Health Organization

World Patient Safety Day 17 September 2021

World Patient Safety Day

Goals 2021–2022

Safe maternal and newborn care

The cover features a circular illustration of a smiling man, a woman holding a newborn, and a healthcare worker in a white coat, set against a green background.

Strengthening infection prevention and control in primary care

A collection of existing standards, measurement and implementation resources

The cover has a dark blue background with a central circular graphic containing icons for a house with a cross, a pregnant woman, and people in a community setting.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN MATERNAL AND NEONATAL CARE

A 6-module training package for a safe care pathway for women and newborns

The cover features a white illustration of a woman holding a newborn baby against a dark blue background.

Module 1

Key messages



- Disruption of essential health services within the COVID-19 context is evident
- Disruptions span across all major health areas, including in maternal and newborn services
- Improvement trend: better results now than in 2020
- Causes of disruption are diverse: both on demand and supply side
- System's approach needed to address the issue of disruption:
 - *Broader system interventions, across all functions*
 - *Specific interventions around maternal and newborn health and safety*
 - *Specific interventions around health worker safety and patient safety*
- Context considerations and adaptation to changing contexts and needs is extremely important
- **Risks for mothers and newborns of adverse outcomes associated with unattended childbirth outweigh the potential risks of COVID-19 transmission at health facilities!**

Act now for safe and respectful childbirth!



<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-patient-safety-day/2021>