

Dear Members,

Greetings from the editor's desk...!!!

We are the largest continent of the world, and the maximum number of children are born in our region. Though moving up at a moderate pace, still our health budget, infrastructure, doctor–patient ratio, nurse–patient ratio are all below par. Along with it the awareness, accessibility, affordability, understanding of the patient are very different from region to region but what is not different is the expectation of each pregnant woman about the antenatal and postnatal care being provided with tender loving care and respect.

“Birth is an experience that demonstrates that life is not merely function and utility, but form and beauty”—*Christopher Largen*.

Giving birth should be our greatest achievement and not greatest fear. Respectful maternity care is every woman's right, though it was not appreciated and expected to the extent what it is nowadays but today concerns about the provision of respectful care and also the need to humanize birth are taking a very holistic turn. There are many advocates emphasizing on the global front about obstetric violence, about the abuse of medicalization of natural phenomenon which is deeply impacting the position of not only obstetricians, nurses, midwives but the whole health system also. It is of utmost importance that our care provision should not be influenced by socioeconomic status, age, parity, ethnicity and race. Respectful maternity care is very crucial component of quality care and WHO, FIGO, White Ribbon Alliance and several other organizations worldwide have all been unrelentlessly working on provision of guidelines for improving quality of care. WHO published guidelines in 2016 with eight domains of quality care including six strategic areas. All these interventions have been aimed at addressing the experiences of disrespectful and abusive care during childbirth, however, there are other aspects which need to be understood in depth in order to address this. It not only takes care of experience, but has far-fetching impacts on the health outcomes of women also, be it an increase in normal delivery, physical, mental and emotional health of women, families and healthcare providers. There is a deep impact on the relationship of the patients with the healthcare providers too. The issues are much larger and deeper than what appear on the surface, we need to work on the dynamics of the model of care provision, which many times are institution-centered rather than being women-centered. We also need to focus on the staff training and emphasizing on attitude transformation, training in interpersonal communication skills along with monitoring of disrespect and abuse and an overall staff mentoring about provision of good quality care with improved privacy with improved staff care along with counseling as mandatory interventions required for respectful maternity care. There are many crossroads between medical and social models of births, traditional midwives and professional midwives, the interpersonal relationships of the healthcare providers and professionalism, personal ethics, and social hierarchy. We may keep on talking and discussing about it, but the strong foundations of respectful maternity care must be laid in the medical and nursing schools themselves because old habits die hard and it is expected of all the teachers and seniors to lead by examples. Strong emphasis should be laid on education and empowerment of the women at large, for them to be able to understand and appreciate the differences in the care provision. I also feel mutual respect for each other by the key healthcare providers along with optimum use of the infrastructure is the key pointer in a high workload and poor working environment. Needless to say, this kind of care is not only confined to low- and middle-income countries but also rampant all over the world, which has forced many organizations to work towards this. Through this column I urge all stakeholders in the region to incorporate all the interventions required for provision of compassionate and respectful maternity care which our women deserve as much as anyone else.



**Jaideep Malhotra**

Managing Director, Rainbow IVF, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Chief of Editorial Board, SAFOMS Journal

Chair, FIGO Committee of Reproductive Medicine, Endocrinology and Infertility

Past Member of FIGO Working Group on RDEH

Member of Accountability Group of PMNCH (WHO)

Past President FOGSI, ISAR, ISPAT, ASPIRE, IMS