

## **Maternal Healthcare Interventions Implemented Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic in Mmabatho, North-West, South Africa.**

Makgake Ziphorah Mohulatsi<sup>1\*</sup>, Tendayi Clotilda Garutsa<sup>1, \*</sup>, Boipelo Bahule<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sociology, North-West University, Mahikeng 2790, South Africa;

ofentsezeezy@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Sociology, North-West University, Potchefstroom 2531, South Africa

\*Correspondence: mgarutsa@gmail.com (T.C.G.); boipelo.bahule@nwu.ac.za (B.B)

### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** South Africa has made substantial investments in enhancing maternal and neonatal health services; nevertheless, the country fell short of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for maternal and child health by 2015. Despite having established national maternal and neonatal health policies and objectives, the absence of a unified quality improvement approach poses challenges. The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic has further complicated these difficulties, creating obstacles to healthcare access and hindering the implementation of maternal and perinatal interventions.

**Methods:** Through a qualitative research design, this study aims to explore the interventions implemented in maternal healthcare in Mmabatho, North-West, South Africa, amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were selected from Mmabatho, North-West Province, South Africa and in-depth interviews were undertaken. Thematic content analysis was used to identify themes.

**Results:** The findings underscore the pivotal role played by community-based interventions, particularly the involvement of community health workers, in providing information and support for maternal healthcare. Although awareness of digital health programs such as MomConnect varied among participants, they were generally commended for disseminating knowledge about maternal healthcare.

**Discussion:** This article highlights the necessity for robust security measures to protect patient information in digital healthcare communication. Furthermore, the development of mHealth initiatives, the expansion of community-based interventions, the involvement of males in maternal healthcare, and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems should be considered to assess the efficacy of interventions. Addressing these aspects is crucial to enhancing the overall landscape of maternal and neonatal health in the region.

**Keywords:** Interventions, access and availability, maternal health care, Covid-19