



SUCCESS STORY

In Diyala, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses Improves Health Worker Performance and Quality of Care

PHCPI aims to strengthen the Primary Health Care system, critical for achieving the Ministry of Health's strategic goal of improved quality of Primary Health Care services and overall healthcare outcomes for Iraq.



Dr. Qais Hasan explains the implementation of IMCI in Almuqdadia district.



Staff at Alzahraa PHCC in Almuqdadia district discuss the benefits of IMCI.

Every day in Iraq, thousands of parents seek health care for their sick children, taking them to hospitals and health centers, looking for better healthcare. Surveys reveal that many sick children are not properly assessed and treated by these health care providers, and that their parents are poorly advised. Unfortunately, due to the lack of equipment and capacity development, Iraq's maternal and child mortality rates are still high when compared to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 for 2015.

USAID's Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI) works alongside the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) to help in strengthening primary health care (PHC) services, especially those targeting the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality. One of the programs PHCPI has been instrumental in improving is the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI).

Dr. Qais Hasan, Almuqdadia district director and one of the doctors trained by PHCPI, spoke about the program, "Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses is a great strategy and should be implemented all over Iraq to reduce child death rates. It ensures the combined treatment of major childhood illnesses, emphasizing prevention of disease through immunization and improved nutrition. We have had many successes in the program through staff trainings and follow-ups and we will continue until we have full implementation in the Almuqdadia district." Dr. Qais, who is responsible for implementation in Almuqdadia's primary health care clinics (PHCCs), is very optimistic about the benefits the IMCI will continue to bring to his district.

Additionally, IMCI staff trained in Alzahraa PHCC mentioned, "We participated in many IMCI training courses and on-the-job training sessions and learned how to treat patients and how to fill out IMCI records. We noticed these new methods helped care flow more easily for the staff as well as for the patients."

Due to PHCPI's implementation of the IMCI program, the PHCCs reached by the project have the ability to properly diagnose, treat and document childhood illness. With continued success of the IMCI program, Iraq will be better equipped to reduce child and neonatal mortality leading to the achievement of the 2015 MDGs 4 and 5.