

*Abstract title:*

"Nobody's here with me": A qualitative investigation of women's delivery location in urban slum-dwelling India [Abstract #OP1.1]

*Authors:*

Khan LN,<sup>1</sup> Shitole T,<sup>2</sup> O'Brien J,<sup>1</sup> Patil-Deshmukh A,<sup>2</sup> Bloom DE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Global Health and Population at the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA, U.S.A.

<sup>2</sup>Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action, and Research (PUKAR), Mumbai, India

*Introduction:* Over half the world's population now lives in urban areas and urban slums are growing exponentially. The urban poor have complex and dire health needs. In India, women and girls are in many cases doubly marginalized by poverty and gender, and they experience significant morbidity and early mortality. We use the Anderson behavioral model of health service utilization to investigate one aspect of women's reproductive health – that of giving birth.

*Objective:* In 2010 the authors conducted a qualitative investigation in Mumbai, India to understand some of the barriers urban poor women face in access to and utilization of quality maternal health services; why were many urban Indian women living in close proximity to a government health facility still delivering in the home?

*Methods:* In close collaboration with the local research initiative Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research, 6 focus groups and 11 key informant interviews were conducted with women who had at least one child under 5.

*Results:* The data were systematically analyzed to reveal that poor urban women maintained strong ties to their rural native villages and returned there to deliver their children, often in the home. The low utilization of urban facilities for delivery was related to a lack of social support, low decision-making power, tradition, and financial and residential insecurity, not necessarily knowledge of services provided (which was high). Women delivered in their urban slum home only in an emergency; the vast majority of urban deliveries occurred in health facilities.

*Conclusion:* Program- and policy-makers must acknowledge the urban poor's dynamic and cyclical migration patterns, and programs to encourage the utilization of maternal health services in urban areas should take a family-centered approach to ensure targeting the household decision-maker. Social capital must be cultivated in urban slum areas to encourage women to stay for their deliveries.

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*\*For more information on this work, please contact [laura.khan12@gmail.com](mailto:laura.khan12@gmail.com)\**