

Boosting coverage of midwife care could avert deaths

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(HealthDay)—About two-thirds of maternal deaths, neonatal deaths, and

stillbirths could be averted with universal coverage of midwife-delivered interventions, according to a study published online Dec. 1 in *The Lancet Global Health*.

Andrea Nove, Ph.D., from Novametrics in Duffield, England, and colleagues used the Lives Saved Tool to estimate the number of deaths that would be averted by 2035 with a scale -up of [coverage](#) of health interventions that can be delivered by professional midwives.

The researchers estimated that a substantial increase (25 percent every five years) in coverage of midwife-delivered interventions could avert 41 percent of maternal deaths, 39 percent of neonatal deaths, and 26 percent of stillbirths, equating to 2.2 million deaths averted per year by 2035 relative to current coverage. Overall, 22, 23, and 14 percent of maternal deaths, neonatal deaths, and stillbirths, respectively, equating to 1.3 million deaths averted per year by 2035, were estimated with a modest increase (10 percent every five years) in coverage of midwife-delivered interventions. Universal coverage (to 95 percent) could avert 67, 64, and 65 percent of [maternal deaths](#), [neonatal deaths](#), and stillbirths, respectively, relative to current coverage, equating to 4.3 million lives to be saved annually by 2035.

"Supported by appropriate professional education, [regulation](#), and improved working environments, it is possible to achieve a substantial increase in the level of provision of essential interventions delivered by midwives," Nove said in a statement. "This could save millions of lives."

Novametrics was awarded a grant by the New Venture Fund, which funded the study.

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