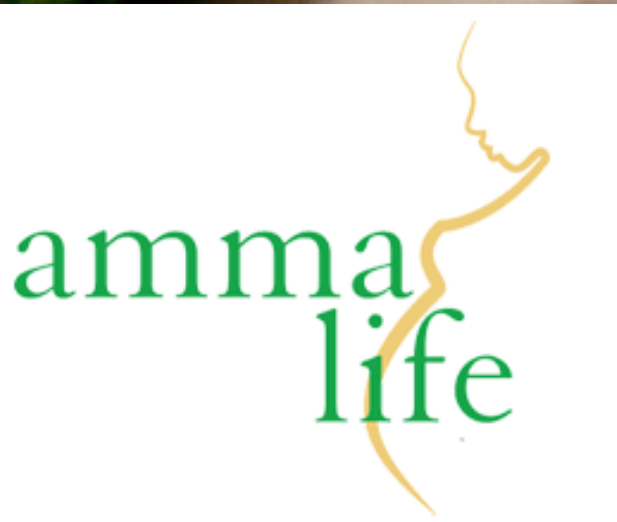


2018 ANNUAL REPORT





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WELCOME

Over the last decade, the global maternal mortality rate has happily fallen. Nevertheless, this progress is starting to slow down, highlighting the need for us to continue our work if more mothers' lives are to be saved. The majority of the world's maternal deaths continue to be preventable and treatable, meaning that mothers are not dying because the knowledge of how to treat them is not there, but because in many settings healthcare systems are overburdened, understaffed and lacking essential resources. It is inequality that is ultimately the root cause of mothers' deaths. When Ammalife was first founded in 2007, it was decided that we would operate on three principles; practical research, investing in Change Makers, and working in partnership. It is hoped that through these three principles, Ammalife can help to address some of this inequality that leads to such high yet unnecessary instances of maternal deaths across the world.



In terms of research, the FAST-M trial which Ammalife has been supporting over the course of 2018 has proven to be both feasible and acceptable to the clinicians in Malawi, offering an effective, low-resource and culturally appropriate solution to maternal sepsis. This is excellent news for the provision of maternal healthcare in Malawi. Elsewhere, Ammalife has supported ground-breaking research into the experience of healthcare workers in the maternity wards of Malawi. Our Change Makers are blossoming in terms of their potential to become leaders in their fields, and have already made an impact on their local teams, spreading good practice and sharing their newfound knowledge of maternal healthcare.

We've continued to strengthen our relationships with our partner organisations PACHI and NAOCO in Malawi, and we started the process of a new collaboration with another local NGO, MABIN, in Pakistan, which we hope to develop in 2019.

This year we've grown as an organisation, welcoming a new permanent member of staff onto the team, three new members onto our Executive Board, and welcoming our newest Patron, Professor Alice Roberts to the Ammalife family. We've had our most successful Big Give Christmas Challenge yet, raising almost a third more than last year's campaign. None of this would have been possible without the generous help of Ammalife's supporters, donors, and volunteers, who share our belief that no mother should die whilst giving birth, and to whom we are truly thankful.

With gratitude,

Professor Arri Coomarasamy
Founder of Ammalife

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MATERNAL SEPSIS

This year, Ammalife has been focused on its flagship maternal sepsis project in Malawi. For the last few years we have been supporting the **FAST-M trial** in Malawi, implemented by the University of Birmingham and our partner organisation, PACHI Malawi. FAST-M is a treatment bundle for maternal sepsis, with each letter standing for a simple but effective measure (Fluids, Antibiotics, Source Control, Transport to a health facility, and Monitoring of mother and child). Healthcare workers were trained in the use of MEOWS charts (Modified Early Obstetric Warning Score) that helped them to decide if a mother was suffering from maternal sepsis by checking a mothers' vital signs. They were also trained in the FAST-M treatment bundle tools, which allowed them to decide what treatment and which antibiotics to administer to the patients. Maternal Sepsis champions were also selected, to promote the use of the tools, to support staff during the project, and to monitor the implementation of the sepsis bundle.

PACHI Project Coordinator Laura Munthali spoke of how the FAST-M trial had led to improved outcomes for mothers with maternal sepsis; 'The FAST-M study... raised awareness of the importance of checking vital signs to identify maternal sepsis. Before FAST-M was implemented, only a few indicators were used to detect infection and sepsis (such as fever)... Quicker identification of symptoms has led to health care providers being able to treat sick mothers more effectively... It has become much easier to trace a mother's progress once she has been admitted until she is discharged, improving overall healthcare.'

During the fourteen months of the FAST-M trial, 27,500 mothers received observations for maternal sepsis across the three hospitals and the twelve healthcare centres that took part in the study. After six months of the study, 64% of mothers were receiving the correct antibiotics for sepsis within one hour of diagnosis, compared to just 15% at the beginning of the study. This is excellent news, as mothers suffering from sepsis require rapid treatment in order to prevent sepsis from shutting down their bodies' vital organs. Doctors and clinicians all thought of the FAST-M tools and bundle as effective, simple to use, and appropriate to the low-resource setting. PACHI's Project Coordinator Laura noted how it was "awesome being part of the study and witnessing these developments which are improving the healthcare of mothers. It is also exciting to have such an experience which has positive changes towards the administration of care."

Now that the FAST-M trial is over, Ammalife will continue to support the work on maternal sepsis in Malawi across the sites, in collaboration with our partner organisation, PACHI, through contributing to the production costs of the FAST-M paper decision making tools, the purchase of vital equipment (such as blood pressure monitors and fetoscopes) and the continued training of clinicians in sepsis care.

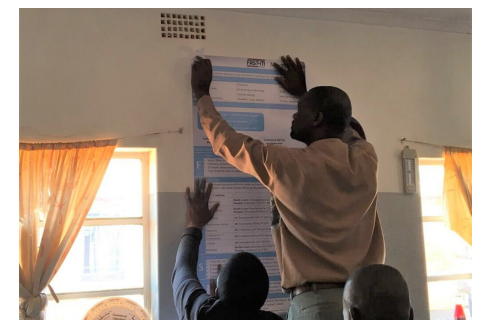


MATERNAL SEPSIS

As well as supporting the diagnosis and treatment of mothers with maternal sepsis in Malawi, this year we have also supported research into infection prevention, led by Ammalife researcher Catherine Dunlop as part of her PhD. Sepsis is caused by infection, which is often the result of poor hygiene practices, which is why Ammalife has invested in practical solutions to stop the root causes of infection.

Good hand-washing and hand hygiene practices were promoted across the three hospitals and twelve healthcare centres of the FAST-M project. This was achieved largely through training, including the creation of a dance that incorporated the different stages of hand-washing. This turned out to be a fun way to help participants remember what they had learnt, as well as being a huge hit with Ammalife's supporters! As well as training, hospitals and healthcare centres also received essential equipment to prevent infections, such as standalone hand-washing stations (pictured on the right) and the use of alcohol gels was also introduced. The team also rolled out the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations for preventing maternal infections, distributing posters and booklets to accompany training.

The infection prevention work was particularly welcomed by clinical staff who recognised that preventing hospital-acquired infections would drastically reduce instances of maternal sepsis and also reduce their workload in the future. Alcohol gel was particularly welcomed for being easy to use. Whilst only 7.81% of clinical staff were complying with hand hygiene measures (hand washing or using alcohol gel) at the beginning of the FAST-M study, over 81% of staff were complying with the measures six months into the study, demonstrating how clinical staff recognised the importance of these measures and the ease of which they could be implemented. Now that the FAST-M study is finished, we'll continue to support this important work into 2019, with the aim of preventing more infections, and by extension, preventing more cases of maternal sepsis.



MEDICAL SUPPLIES DONATIONS

Back in May after a mammoth donation drive we sent hoards of medical supplies to our partner hospitals in Malawi via a shipping container, which was kindly let to us at cost price by the Birmingham Anglican Diocese. Hundreds of needles, dressings, catheters, medicines, and other essential items for maternal healthcare, as well as medical textbooks and dictionaries made their way across the ocean in a two-month odyssey to Malawi where they arrived in the summer. The talented doctors and healthcare professionals from our partner health centres were delighted to receive essential medical supplies, enabling them to continue their great work.



CHANGE MAKERS

Ammalife's Change Makers programme identifies individuals who have the potential to develop their expertise and to improve the care of mothers in their locality. This year **Stanley Daudi** finished his tenure as an Ammalife Change Maker after he completed his studies in Malawi. Stanley first developed a desire to work in healthcare after his mother fell ill. After witnessing the inadequate care she received, Stanley was motivated to become an agent of change. He first trained to be a paramedic and later went on to become an anaesthetic clinical officer.

Stanley first came into contact with Ammalife when he was at medical school. A notoriously hard worker and utterly dedicated to his cause, Stanley had sold all of his possessions to pay his fees and was consequently at the cusp of being thrown off his programme. However, with the support of Ammalife, and thanks to the generosity of our donors, Stanley was able to finish his time at medical school and is now fully qualified. Stanley notes, 'The impact of being an Ammalife Change Maker personally has been vast. Every clinical officer I had worked with before now looks to me as an achiever, as a role model who defied all the odds. Patients are now looking to me as an authority on their healthcare prospects and they always respect my decisions. During my studies, I learnt a great deal of techniques and approaches that were unknown to clinicians in Malawi, and I am looking forward to pioneering some of these interventions in order to spread new knowledge and best practice. Now that my studies are over, it is time to give back and to serve my community. I like clinical work and I feel like I belong at the bedside, providing good quality care to patients.' Congratulations Stanley on your achievements; we know you'll make a big impact on improving the quality of care for mothers in Malawi.

Yolam Kamene is a current Ammalife Change Maker and the present Joseph O'Hare scholarship student. Yolam has now finished his third year of clinical studies at the University of Malawi, passing with excellent marks. He has already been making waves in Malawi, passing on his knowledge to local maternal healthcare workers. Whilst on his university holidays Yolam was busy putting his learning into practice at the Chitipa District Hospital in the northern part of Malawi, where he worked in the hospital's operating theatre, performing various operations including caesarean sections. He has already been passing on his knowledge, supervising an intern clinical officer, Blessing Myaba, who worked with him on the maternity ward. As well as this, he facilitated continuing professional development workshops for nurses and clinicians on neonatal resuscitation at the hospital, as part of an initiative to improve the knowledge and skills of health workers in neonatal care. Never one to be bored, Yolam volunteered to help with a project at Chitipa Prison, screening the health of the prisoners for TB, HIV and other conditions, prescribing treatment and referring patients for X-rays where necessary.

Yolam noted 'as a practising clinical officer with an interest in clinical work, I always go to the hospital during the holidays to practice, which gives me an opportunity to maintain my knowledge and skills... My favourite place to work is on the gynaecology and obstetrics ward and it is my hope to work in this field in the future.' Well done Yolam for all your hard work; we're delighted to see that you're already active in spreading important clinical knowledge and improving the practice of maternal healthcare in Malawi.



Above: Stanley Daudi is now fully qualified and leading better healthcare practices in Malawi.

Below: Our current Change Maker Yolam Kamene teaching at a neonatal resuscitation workshop



NAOCO CONFERENCE

For the fourth year running, Ammalife sponsored the annual conference of the National Association of Obstetricians and Clinical Officers (NAOCO) of Malawi (previously MAOCO) with a grant of £3,000, in line with our mission to share knowledge and best practice in maternal healthcare. The conference, which took place in November in Lilongwe, included sessions on how to diagnose and treat pre-eclampsia, the use of magnesium sulphate in pregnancy, approaching teenage pregnancy, approaches to asthma in pregnancy and multiple pregnancies, as well as a session on maternal sepsis which was delivered by Ammalife's very own researcher, James Cheshire. The conference was attended by over 50 doctors, obstetricians and clinical officers from across Malawi, and we were delighted to see several of Ammalife's past Change Makers participating in the conference. NAOCO reflected on how they valued the conference, as it facilitated the exchange of ideas on service improvement.

RESEARCH

This year, two papers were published which contained research on maternal health connected to Ammalife. In August, past Ammalife Change Maker and researcher Abi Merriel published a paper on the experiences of maternity staff at district hospitals in Malawi. Abi's paper noted how there were too few maternity healthcare workers in Malawi, even though skilled maternity healthcare professionals are essential to improve outcomes for mothers and babies. As a result of these shortages in personnel, maternity workers are often overworked and have low job satisfaction. The paper considered how low-cost solutions could be developed to improve working life and therefore improve the quality of care for mothers and babies.



The research for this paper took place during Abi's doctoral studies, which were part-funded by Ammalife. Abi also worked on the FAST-M project, collaborating with our Malawian partner PACHI, as well as working on the AIMS clinical trial. Abi's paper '[Learning from the experience of maternity healthcare workers in Malawi: a qualitative study leading to ten low-cost recommendations to improve working lives and quality of care](#),' was published by BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth and is available through open access on their website.

Earlier in April, the Cochrane Library also published a systematic review considering the use of uterotonic agents for preventing postpartum haemorrhage, one of the leading causes of maternal death worldwide. A whole host of Ammalife researchers and trustees took part in the meta-analysis, including our founder Arri Coomarasamy, who is also one of the authors on the paper. The paper recommended three drugs that were considered to be the most effective in preventing postpartum haemorrhage. You can read the paper, '[Uterotonic agents for preventing postpartum haemorrhage: a network meta-analysis](#)' on the Cochrane Library's website where it is available through open access.

OUR PATRONS

This year we welcomed Professor Alice Roberts to the Ammalife family as our third patron, joining our two existing patrons, Clare Short and the Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell. Alice is a trained medical doctor with a special interest in human anatomy. She previously worked as a junior doctor before becoming a university lecturer in anatomy and physical anthropology. Alice is the current Professor of Public Engagement with Science at the University of Birmingham and has enjoyed a glittering career in television, presenting diverse programmes on anatomy and archaeology, such as *The Incredible Human Journey*, *Origins of Us*, *Ice Age Giants*, and *Britain's Most Historic Towns*. She has also written several books such as *The Incredible Human Journey*, and *The Incredible Unlikeness of Being*, the latter having been nominated for the Wellcome Book Prize.

Since becoming a patron of Ammalife, Alice has helped us to promote our 2018 Big Give Christmas Challenge campaign, presenting a special video explaining the dangers of maternal sepsis in Malawi and how Ammalife is helping to combat the condition in the country. Alice also worked with us to produce two more promotional videos, one on Ammalife's general work which was released in early 2019, and another explaining the problem of maternal sepsis in more detail, which is in post-production. Alice's videos for Ammalife proved an instant success on our social media, attracting our biggest post engagements to date. We're looking forward to working with Alice in the future to help us to widen our audience and to spread Ammalife's mission and message further.



VOLUNTEERS

We've been lucky enough this year to have a team of dedicated young volunteers working behind the scenes with us as they work towards their Duke of Edinburgh award. Our young volunteers have helped us with thanking donors and other administrative tasks, as well as organising their own fundraising events. DofE volunteer Arran said that 'my experience of working with Ammalife has been great... I chose this charity as it is completely unique... it's been fantastic!' Arran recently organised a sweet sale at his school which raised over £100 for Ammalife.

Our volunteers were a great help when it came to organising our Festive Fundraising Lunch in December, helping with the raffle, cake auction and sourcing entertainment. Fellow young volunteer Abdea noted how 'it was great to see our ideas come to life... it's always good to know that you are making a difference somewhere in a wonderfully positive way.'

We thank our young volunteers for all they've done for Ammalife, and Executive Board member Dr Hajra Khattak who has been supporting and mentoring our volunteers throughout the year.

FUNDRAISING

Over the course of the year, we've been blessed with the support of some excellent fundraisers, doing their bit in whichever way they can to gather donations for Ammalife's work. Early in 2018, two courses were organised by the Birmingham Women's Hospital Academic Department to raise money for Ammalife, both led by our founder Arri Coomarasamy. In February, a course on medical statistics raised £2,000, whilst a second course on scientific writing raised a further £884 for Ammalife's work.

Back in May, Ammalife's own Dr James Cheshire took part in the Edinburgh Marathon, raising another £2,002 for our work. James endured 4am training sessions whilst doing fieldwork in Malawi, where he was often chased by wild dogs, eventually powering through an injury to finish the marathon in 3 hours and 29 minutes. This December, the students and academics at the Birmingham Women's Hospital were also treated to the 'Hairy Baker Girls' cake sale which raised over £350.

The highlight of the year was our Festive Fundraising Lunch which took place in December at the luxurious Tipu Sultan in Moseley. The event raised over £2,000 for our sepsis project, with over 70 guests joining us for a three-course meal and some rocking entertainment. We're grateful to the many local Birmingham businesses which donated raffle prizes for the event, as well as to Al Rayan Bank for their generous sponsorship of the event.

We're extremely thankful to everyone who raised money to keep Ammalife's vital programmes going during 2018; thank you to every single one of you!



- Metaphor - enlivens language - grabs attention
- Cliché - kills it - massive turn-off
- Task: improve the above titles.



BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE 2018

From Tuesday 27th November to Tuesday 4th December, Ammalife took part in the 2018 Big Give Christmas Challenge, the UK's biggest online matched funding campaign. We've been taking part in the Challenge since 2013, and this year was our biggest yet. We were fortunate to receive £5,000 in matched funding from a combination of three generous pledgers and one 'Charity Champion' from the Big Give. With the generosity of our supporters, we smashed our £10,000 donation target, raising £11,667.50 during the Christmas Challenge Week, over £3,000 more than last year's campaign. All the money will go towards providing essential medical equipment and training to our partner doctors and healthcare workers in Malawi, so that they can diagnose and treat mothers with sepsis. We're immensely thankful to everyone who donated.



