

Problem Analysis

It is important to analyse the causes of health problems and the reasons for service delivery problems. Such analysis is required in the situation analysis section of an annual report and is used in the selection of priorities and interventions in the planning.

Health problems, for example, may not be solved through improved medical treatment. For example, high maternal mortality may be a result of nutrition problems, and improving obstetric care will not solve the problem. This technique can be used to analyse the causes for a general health problems, such as high child mortality, or for a specific problem, such as high Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) infection rate.

Figure 1 shows a “problem tree” which can be used to help identify the causes and is a useful group activity³. Each cause can be given a weighting which will allow the causes to be listed in order of priority.

³ Further details on the use of a problem tree can be found in *National District Health Planning Guidelines*. Version 1.0. June 30, 1995, Ministry of Health, Tanzania, Dar es Salaam.

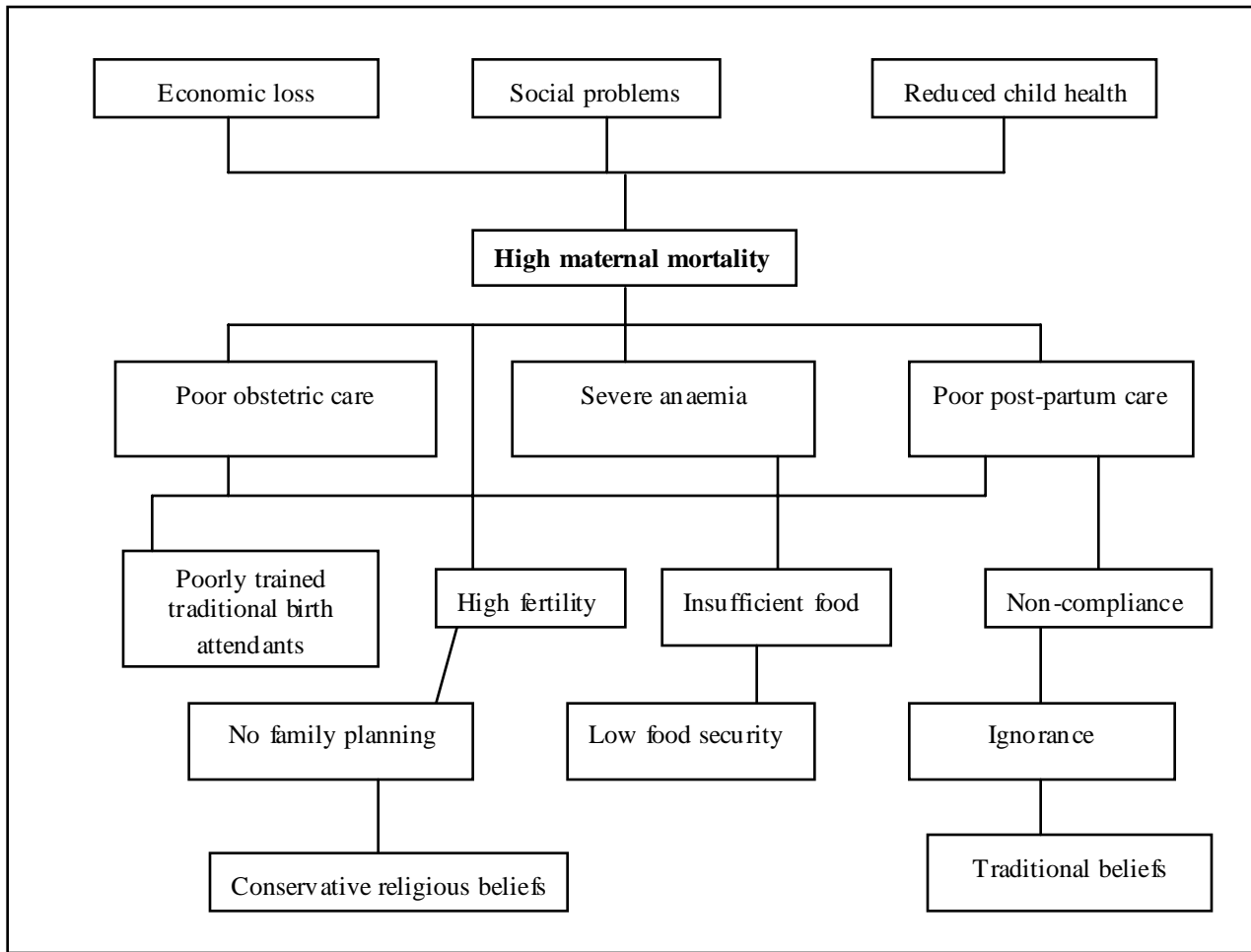


Figure 1. Problem tree showing causes and consequences of high maternal mortality

When the main causes have been analysed, the results can be entered in a table. (*See Table 4 for an example.*) Separate tables should be prepared for the analysis of health problems and service delivery problems.

Table 4. Priority problems and principal causes (illustrative)

Priority Problem	Principal Causes
Priority problem # 1	Cause 1 (most influential)
	Cause 2
	Etc
Priority problem # 2	