



# Integrating Perinatal Mental Health into Obstetric Care

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# Higher burden of disease in Africa

- Worldwide prevalence 26-29.5%<sup>1,2</sup>
- In Africa prevalence ranges from 27% to 39%<sup>3,4</sup>
- Public health problem

1. Al-Abri K et al Prevalence and correlates of perinatal depression. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol.* 2023 Nov;58(11):1581-1590

2. Caffieri A et al Global prevalence of perinatal depression and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic: An umbrella review and meta-analytic synthesis. *Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand.* 2024; 103: 210-224.

3. Roddy Mitchell A, Gordon H, Lindquist A, Walker SP, Homer CSE, Middleton A, Cluver CA, Tong S, Hastie R. Prevalence of Perinatal Depression in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Psychiatry.* 2023 May 1;80(5):425-431.

4. Hartley M, Tomlinson M, Greco E, Comulada WS, Stewart J, le Roux I, Mbewu N, Rotheram-Borus MJ. Depressed mood in pregnancy: prevalence and correlates in two Cape Town peri-urban settlements. *Reprod Health.* 2011 May 2;8:9.



# Implementing combined mental health and antenatal services

Not many studies

Mainly small, qualitative

Look at a single/few clinics

Do show combined services welcomed by women

Meshes with clinical experience

# Studies in Uganda, South Africa, Mali

- Qualitative
- Extent to which integration of perinatal mental care into maternal mental care was considered desirable, possible and opportune
- Concerned stakeholders perceive this as a worthwhile endeavour
- Midwives supported care

Sarkar NDP et al The 4 Domain Integrated Health (4DIH) explanatory framework Soc Sci Med 2022 Mar 296: 113464

Lasater et al. Integrating Mental Health into Maternal Mental Health Care in Rural Mali : A qualitative study. J Midwifery Womens Health 2021 Mar 66(2) 233-239

Brown S and Sprague C. South Africa perceptions of barriers to health care BMC Public Health 2021 Oct 21:21(1) 1905

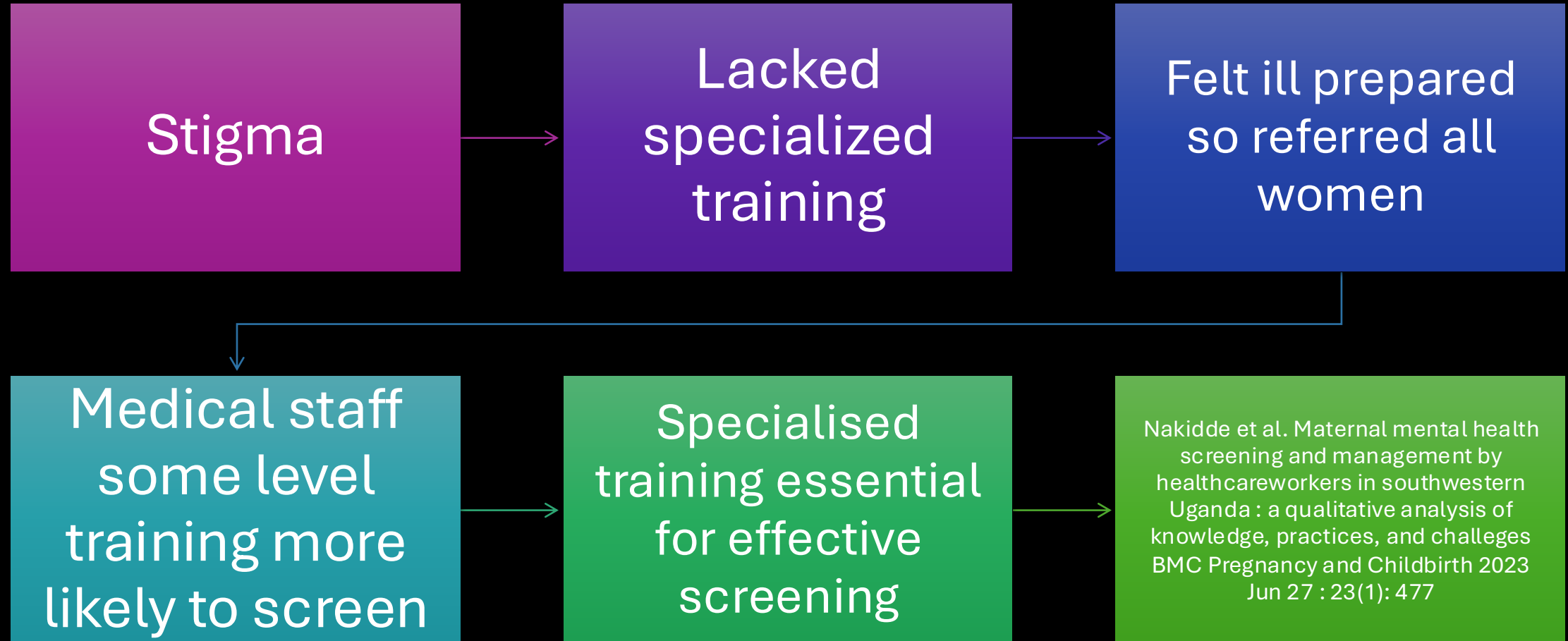


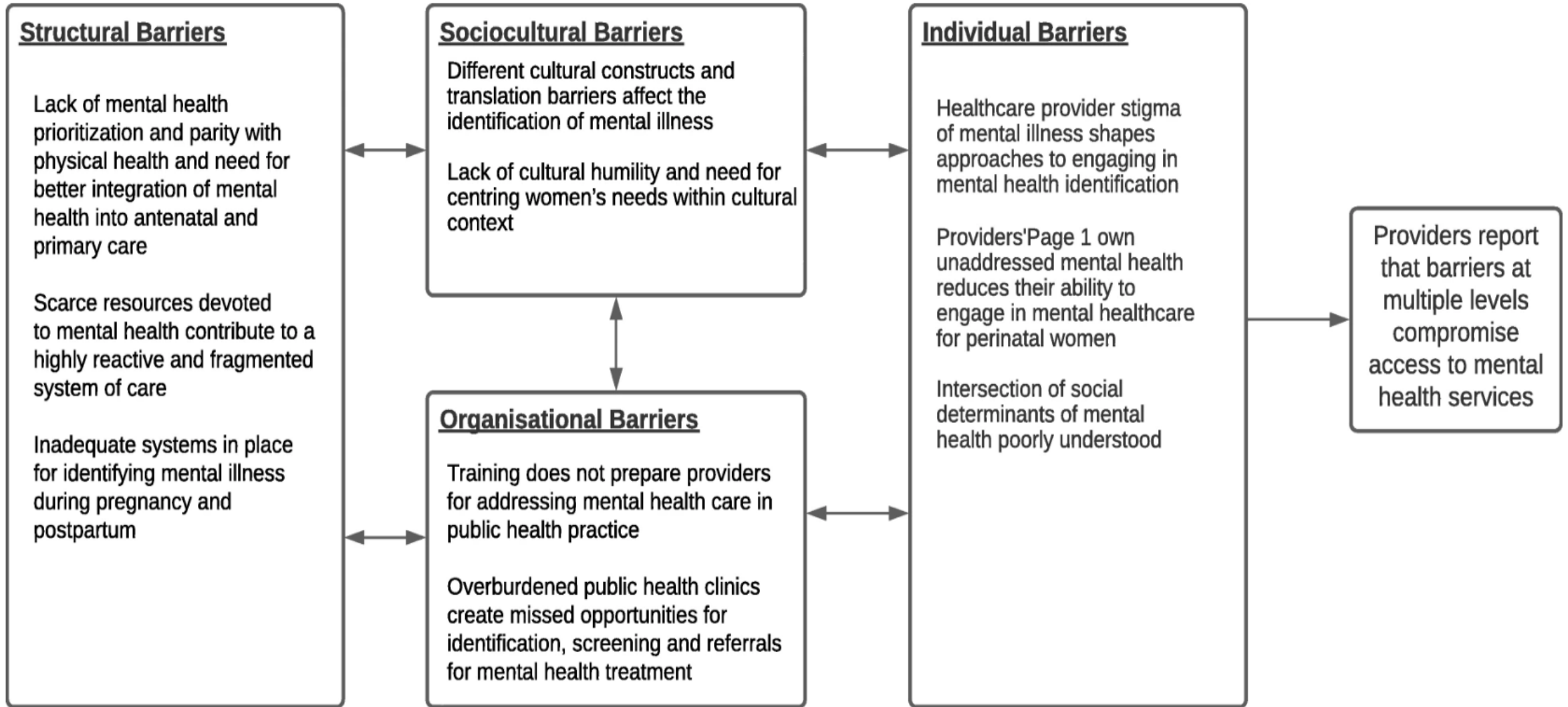
# Mental health needs pregnant and parenting adolescent girls

- High risk group
- Concern for both obstetric and mental health care providers
- Limited mental health interventions
- Involvement and education of the community



# Barriers to integrated care





Brown, S., Sprague, C. Health care providers' perceptions of barriers to perinatal mental healthcare in South Africa. *BMC Public Health* **21**, 1905 (2021)

# Maternal Mental Health in primary care in five LAMIC

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- Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda
- Prevalence and impact priority maternal mental health disorders
- Perinatal depression alcohol use disorders
- No dedicated maternal mental health care service
- South Africa and Ethiopia had a policy
- South Africa implementing a plan
- Challenges
  - Lack of maternal mental health specialists
  - Lack of prescribing guidelines
  - Stigmatising attitudes
- Baron EC et al Maternal Mental Health in primary care in five low and middle income countries : a situational analysis BMC Health Serv Res 2015 Feb 16:16:53

# Integrating HIV and Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services in Rural Malawi

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- Design of delivery/approach careful
- Acceptable to clinic staff
- Local realities includes appropriate investment and oversight

Lasater ME et al. J Midwifery Women's Health 2021 Mar 66(2) 233-239



# Patterns of use of a maternal mental health service in a low resource setting antenatal setting in South Africa

Primary level obstetric facility

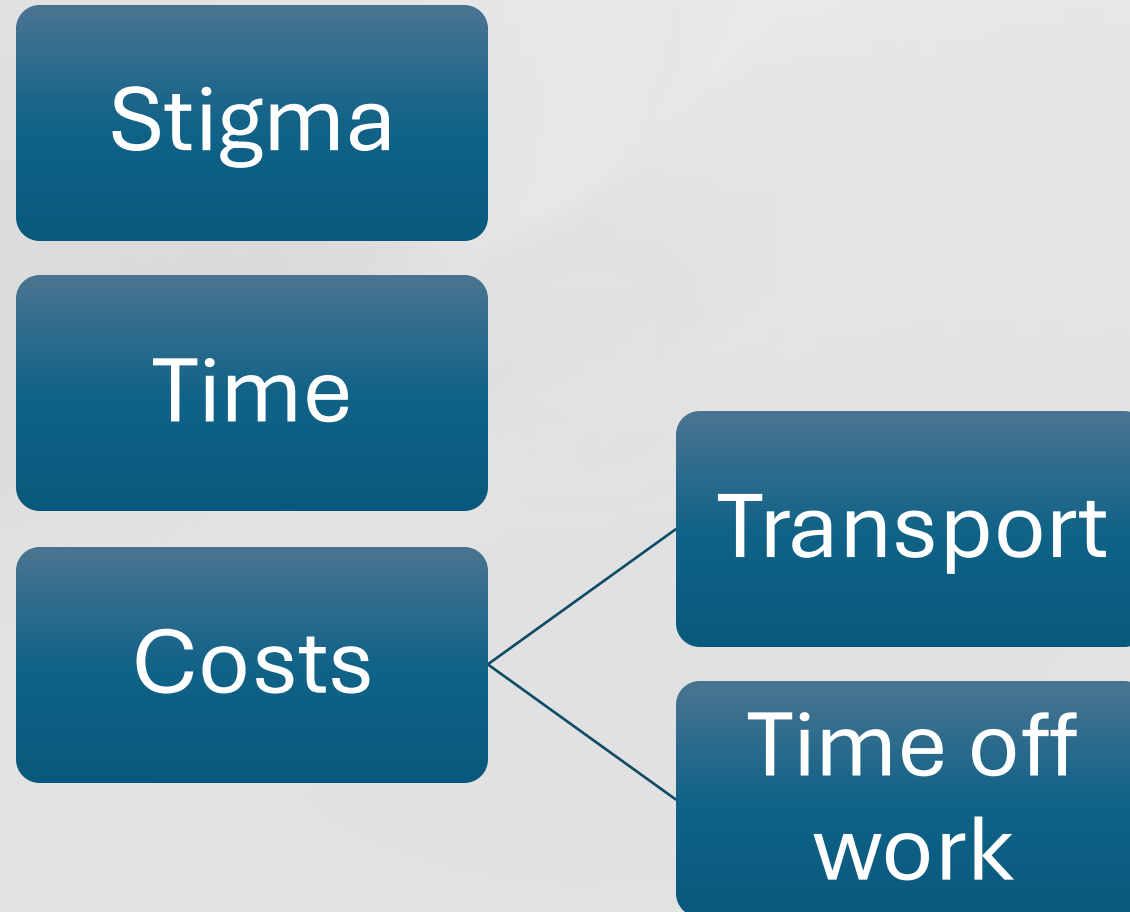
Screened using EPDS

11 item risk factor scale

Offered counselling but only 57.9% accepted counselling

Strategies needed to improve uptake especially among young women

# Why are women not taking up treatment?



# Mixed methods evaluation of mental health care into tuberculosis and maternal-child healthcare services of four South African Districts



District program managers interviewed for maternal child health, tuberculosis, mental health



Qualitative and quantitative data



Nurses should screen for mental health at every visit though only 73% conducted screening and only 44% used a screening tool




DPMs - stepped care approach – mental health care practitioners diagnose, treat or refer mental illness



Only 41% were actually diagnosing mental illness only 7% were treating



Lovero KL et al. Mixed-methods evaluation of mental healthcare integration into tuberculosis and maternal-child healthcare services of four South African districts. BMC Health Serv Res. 2019 Jan 31;19(1):83.

The background image shows a group of nurses in white uniforms sitting at wooden desks in a classroom or meeting room. The nurse in the foreground is a Black woman with glasses, smiling slightly, and holding an open book. Other nurses are visible in the background, also in white uniforms, sitting at their desks. The room has a wooden wall and a window with light coming through.

## The Secret History Method and the development of an ethos of care : Preparing the maternity environment for integrating mental health care in South Africa

- Abuse by nurses of patients common in maternity setting
- Space for nurses to interrogate and re-imagine nurse patient relationships
- Prepare the maternal environment for mental health task shifting

# How do we practically train midwives?

Manage stigma – often self stigma

Vicious cycle lack of knowledge and stigma

How to screen?

Clear pathway for the screen positive woman

Which tool?

Short

Acceptable

Validated

# The missing steps – secondary and tertiary psychiatric care

Focus on midwife led primary care interventions

Where are the psychiatrists?

Experience – dealing with the overwhelming burden of severely behaviourally disturbed patients

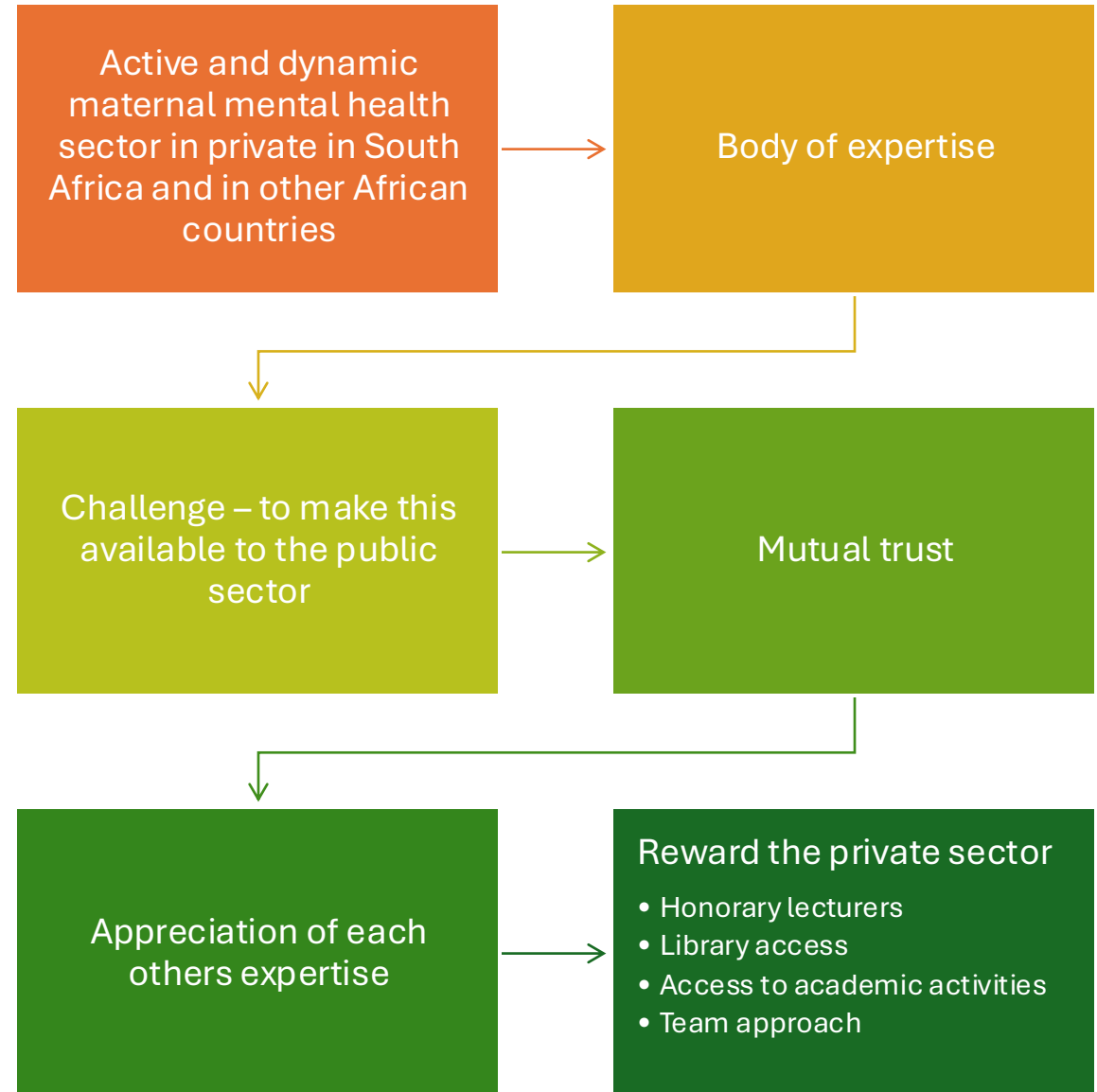
No data



## Growing inequities in maternal health in South Africa : a comparison of serial national household surveys

- High levels inequalities most levels service access
- Worsened over – ANC coverage falling from 97.0% to 90.2%
- Concerns
  - Low levels planned pregnancy
  - Antenatal clinic access
  - Having a doctor present
- Can we extrapolate this to maternal mental health care?

# Maternal mental health in the private sector in South Africa



- Pilot projects to evaluate the utility of public-private partnerships and develop strategies to develop these at scale





- Maternal mental health problems major public health problem
- Across Africa
  - Stigma
  - Lack of education of staff identified as barriers to maternal mental health
- Teens high risk group
- Upskilling and changing perceptions of nurses is key
- Integration with psychiatric services
- More data on service effectiveness