**Background**

Direct impacts of COVID-19
- Negative impacts
- Reduced quality of maternal and newborn care
- Adjustments made in response to COVID-19

**Objective**

- This unique study explored how the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected frontline health workers’ ability to provide respectful maternity care (RMC) globally.

**Methods**

- We used data from the second-round survey (July – December 2020)
- Qualitative responses were analysed using content analysis

**Total participants in the second round survey (n=1127)**

**Participants whose ability to provide RMC was compromised (n=192)**

**Participants who provided open text responses (n=120) – from 33 countries**

**Results**

- 17% of participants (n=192) reported reduced ability to provide RMC during the COVID-19 pandemic
  - 62 participants from HICs provided responses to the RMC-focused open-ended questions (44 MICs, and 14 LICs)
- We identified six themes of how the COVID-19 negatively affected the provision of RMC globally
  - Rapidly changing guidelines and enhanced infection prevention measures
  - Reduced physical support
  - Less family involvement
  - Unjustified caesarean sections
  - Reduced emotional support
  - Compromised standards of care

**Impacts of COVID-19 on the provision of RMC**

**Conclusions**

- Our unique study, drawing from the experiences of health workers, revealed that COVID-19 pandemic had the potential to reverse the gains made on RMC globally
- The low proportion of reduced ability to provide RMC suggests that RMC was already compromised in diverse settings even before the first wave of COVID-19
  - System wide actions are needed to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the provision of RMC.