GALLUP PAKISTAN
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Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of OPD Disease Burden in Punjab (FY 2023–24)

PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of OPD Disease Burden in Punjab (FY 2023–24)

Punjab's Maternal and Newborn Health: High Service Coverage but Persistent Risks — 47,000 Neonatal Deaths in FY 2023–24 and Rising Anemia Undermine Gains

Islamabad, October 21st, 2025

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, presents an analysis of Punjab's outpatient disease burden for FY 2023–24. This release highlights antenatal coverage, anemia in pregnancy, facility deliveries, neonatal deaths, low birth weight, and Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC). All data are drawn from the official DHIS2-based Health Annual Report.

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: "*The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as PSLM, Labour Force Survey, and Economic Survey reports as well as National Census Reports and Election Commission Data sets. The current series is using the District Health Information System dataset which provides a variety of health-related statistics. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan.*"

What data points this current edition covers:

This edition analyzes Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) indicators in Punjab for FY 2023–24, based on DHIS2 health statistics. It reviews antenatal care coverage and anemia at first visits, five-year trends in ANC and anemia, and facility deliveries by type. It also examines neonatal deaths and their causes, the prevalence of low birth weight alongside premature births and stillbirths, and progress in Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) through initiation, outcomes, and follow-ups. Together, these insights highlight Punjab's strong service coverage but also the persistent risks affecting mothers and newborns.

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High Coverage, Limited Impact:

Punjab has strong service utilization (ANC and deliveries) but maternal risks (anemia complications) and neonatal deaths remain high, pointing to quality-of-care issues

Neonatal Mortality is Critical:

47,000 neonatal deaths

With **47,000** neonatal deaths (**4%**), Punjab faces a major newborn survival crisis, mostly preventable with better skilled care.

Anemia a Persistent Challenge:

16%

Despite declines, 16% of pregnant women are still anemic at ANC-1, undermining safe pregnancy outcomes.

Low Birth Weight Signals Maternal Malnutrition:

The **1.8%** LBW prevalence highlights nutritional and antenatal care gaps.

KMC Expansion Needed:

While adoption is growing, weak follow-up limits its potential to reduce infant mortality.

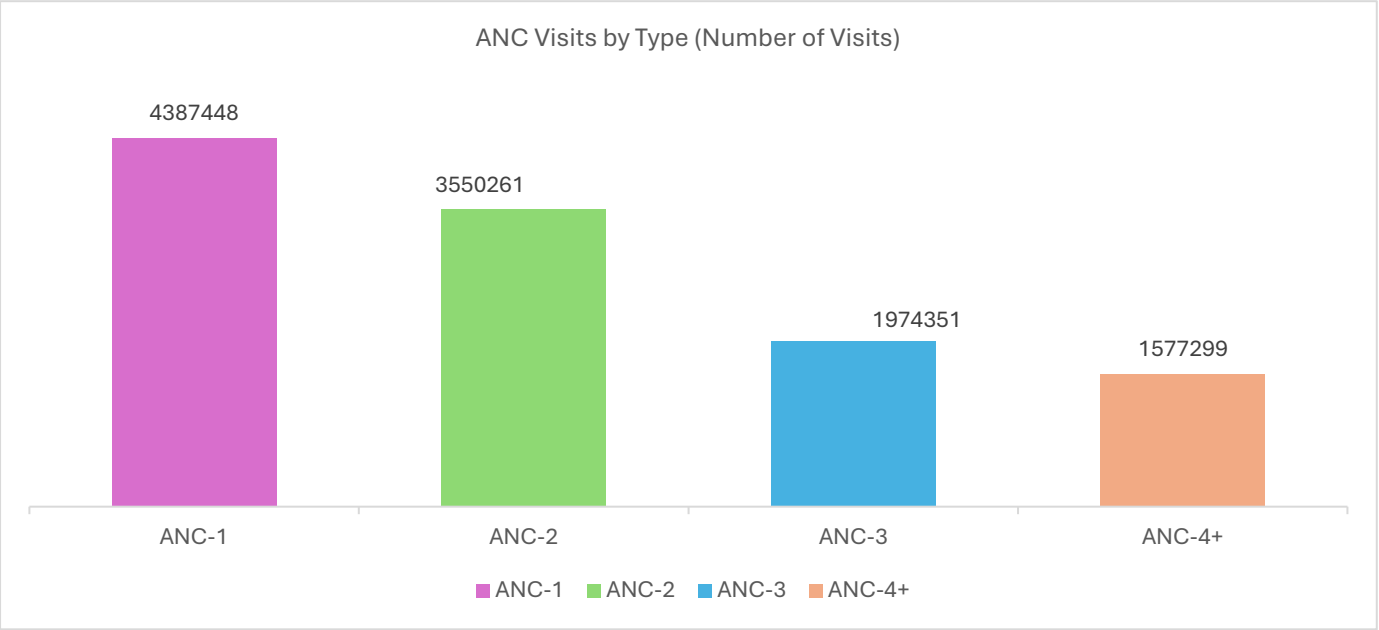
Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

Key Findings:

1. Maternal Health:
   Anemia at first ANC visit has declined to 16%, down from 23% in 2020 — a positive sign of improved screening and supplement uptake. Yet, persistent anemia underscores the impact of poor diet, rising food prices, and low compliance with supplements.
2. Low Birth Weight (LBW):
   Only 1.8% of births were recorded as low birth weight, though district variations suggest underreporting, especially in rural areas. Strengthening data quality and monitoring at peripheral facilities remains critical.
3. Neonatal Mortality:
   47,033 neonatal deaths (4%) were reported in FY 2023–24 — reflecting facility-based deaths only, excluding stillbirths. While the percentage seems modest, the absolute loss is substantial, underscoring the need to improve delivery and postnatal care.
4. Delivery Trends:
   Institutional deliveries rose slightly from 1.25 million (2022–23) to 1.31 million (2023–24), with C-sections holding steady at around 20%. Continued monitoring is needed to balance accessibility with quality of obstetric care.

1. Antenatal Care Coverage

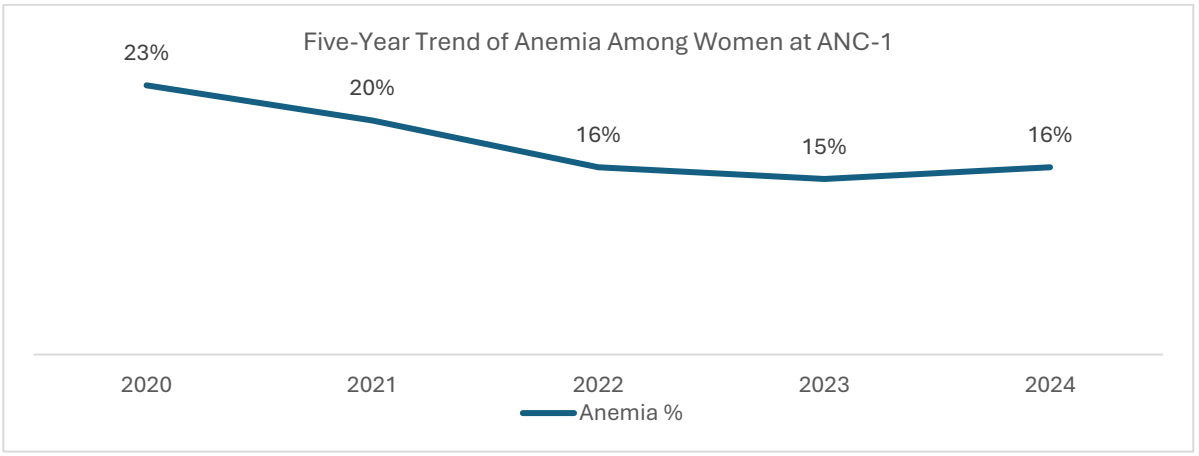
Punjab recorded a remarkable 11.5 million antenatal care visits in FY 2023–24, with ANC-1 visits alone accounting for 4.4 million (38%) of the total. This demonstrates a strong outreach of maternal health services across the province. However, the quality dimension raises concern, as 16% of women at their first ANC visit were found to be anemic, signaling widespread nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy. While high coverage ensures women are accessing facilities, the persistent burden of anemia reveals that access is not automatically translating into improved maternal health outcomes. Although Punjab's ANC coverage is strong, socioeconomic realities continue to affect maternal health outcomes. Rising food prices, poor dietary diversity, and noncompliance with iron and folate supplements all contribute to persistent anemia and related risks. Addressing these factors requires a broader multisectoral response that combines healthcare access with nutrition and poverty alleviation programs



Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

2. Anemia Trends

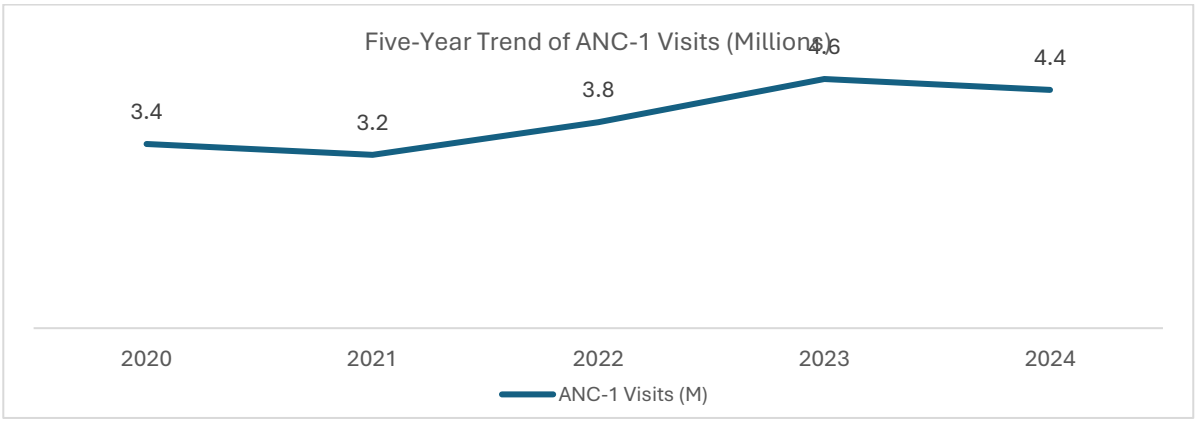
The five-year trend in anemia among pregnant women reveals a long-term decline, dropping from 23% in 2020 to 15% in 2023, which is a commendable improvement. Yet, the figure rose slightly to 16% in 2024, suggesting that earlier progress may be stalling. This uptick could reflect gaps in nutrition interventions, inadequate iron supplementation programs, or broader socioeconomic pressures affecting women's diets. The lesson here is clear: while Punjab has demonstrated success in reducing anemia, the fight is far from over, and renewed focus on nutrition support and awareness is essential to sustain downward momentum.



Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

3. ANC-1 Visits Trend

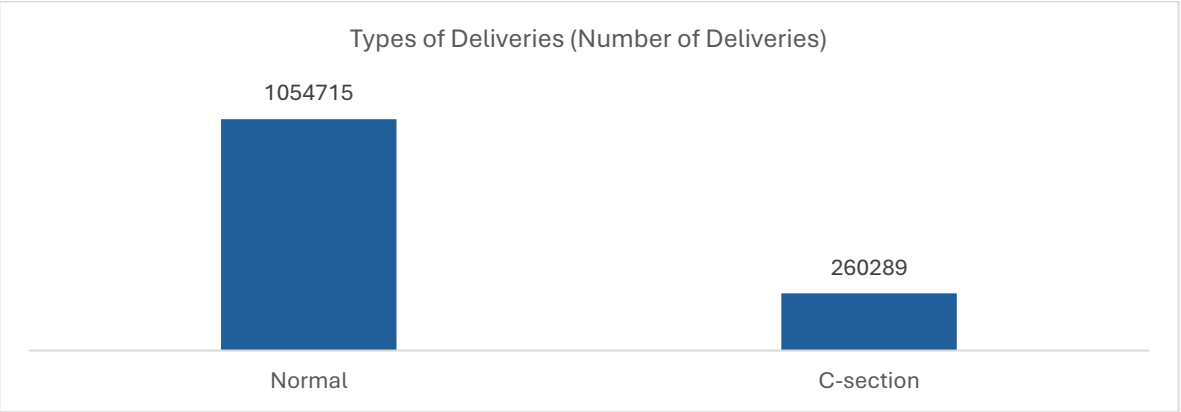
ANC-1 visits have steadily increased over the past five years, rising from 3.4 million in 2020 to a peak of 4.6 million in 2023, before slightly declining to 4.4 million in 2024. This growth reflects progress in maternal health service utilization and improved awareness of antenatal care's importance. However, the small dip in 2024—equivalent to a 6% decline compared to the previous year—is a warning signal. It may point to disruptions in service delivery, post-pandemic health system strain, or challenges in rural accessibility. The trend underscores that sustaining high ANC coverage requires consistent investment in outreach and addressing regional disparities.



Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

4. Deliveries (Facility-based & Types)

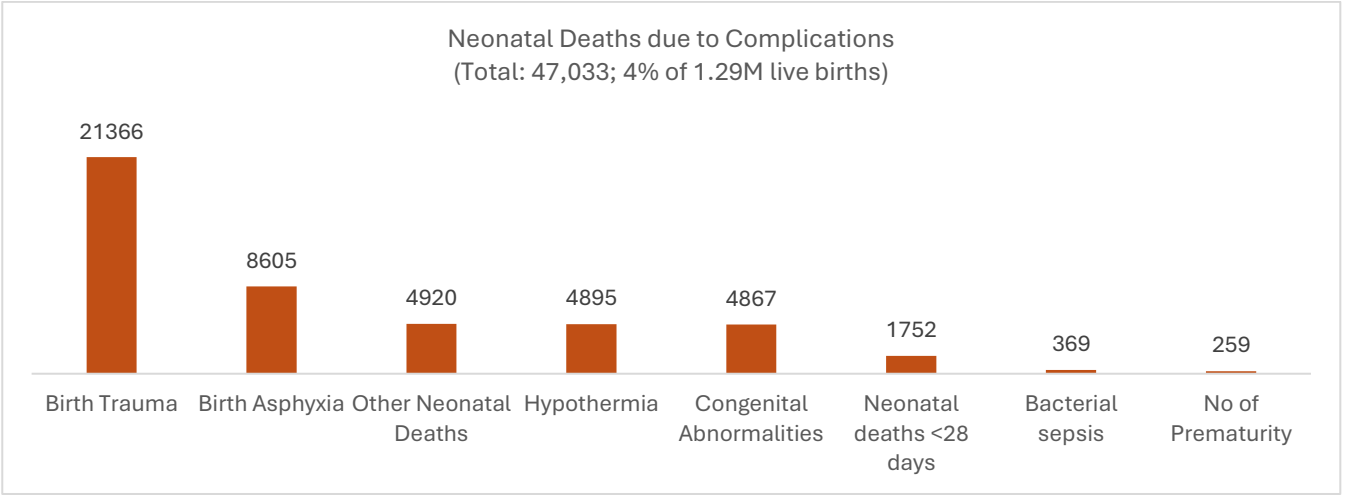
Punjab recorded over 1.3 million deliveries at health facilities in FY 2023–24, representing 36% of expected pregnancies. The majority of these were normal vaginal deliveries (80%), while 20% were C-sections, and less than 1% involved assisted methods such as forceps or vacuum. These figures show that facility-based delivery is becoming the norm, which is a significant achievement for maternal health. However, the relatively high C-section rate raises questions about potential overuse in urban settings versus underuse in rural districts where they might be medically necessary. Ensuring that deliveries are safe, appropriate, and evenly accessible remains a policy priority.



Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

5. Neonatal Deaths

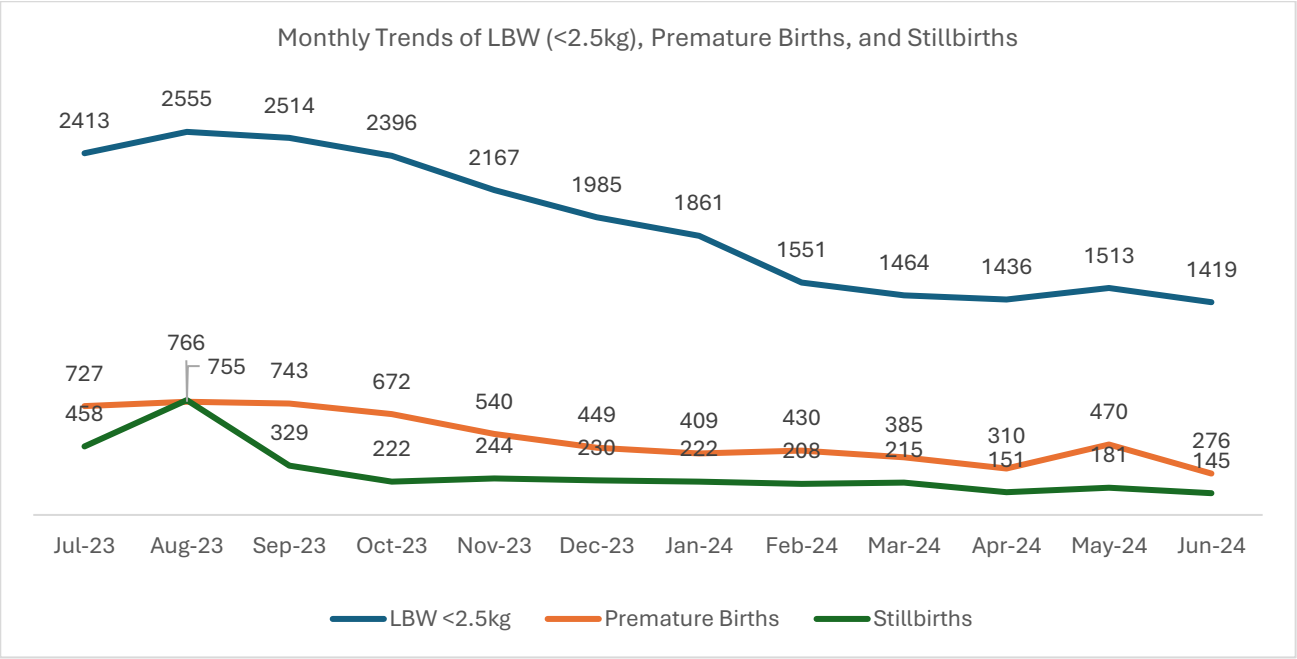
Despite high facility coverage, Punjab still reported 47,033 neonatal deaths in FY 2023–24, accounting for 4% of all live births. The leading causes were birth trauma (21k), birth asphyxia (8.6k), hypothermia (4.9k), and congenital abnormalities (4.9k). These deaths highlight major quality gaps in maternal and newborn care, particularly in skilled obstetric management and immediate newborn resuscitation. The persistence of preventable causes such as birth trauma and asphyxia indicates that better staff training, timely emergency response, and improved neonatal intensive care could dramatically reduce mortality. The data underscores that coverage alone is not enough—quality of care saves lives.



Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

6. Low Birth Weight (LBW)

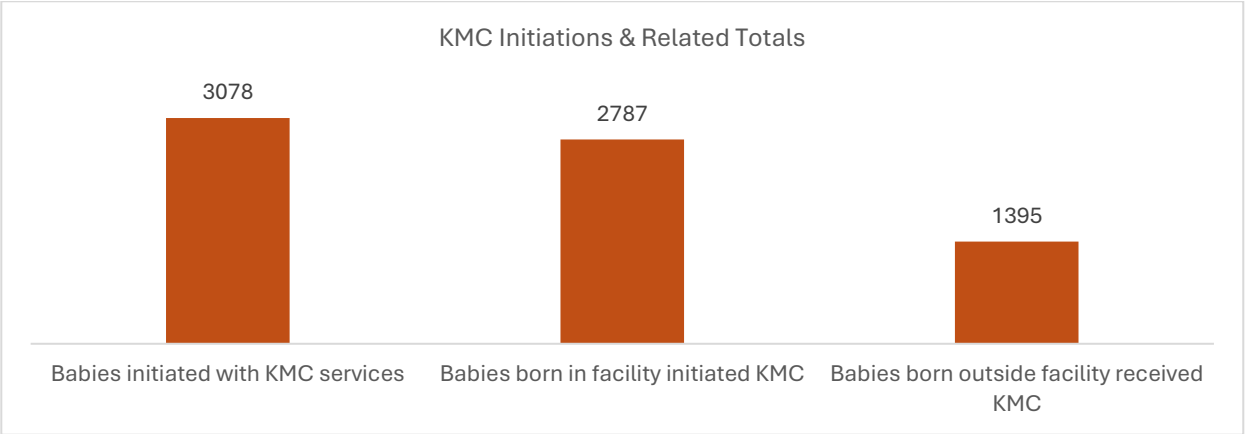
During FY 2023–24, 1.8% of live births in Punjab were classified as low birth weight (<2.5kg). Although this figure seems small at the provincial level, it is a powerful indicator of maternal malnutrition and inadequate antenatal interventions. Monthly LBW counts fluctuated between 150 and 766 cases, showing significant seasonal variation. District disparities are even sharper: areas like Multan recorded more than 4,700 LBW cases, while others reported almost negligible numbers. This variation highlights inequities in maternal nutrition and antenatal care access. Tackling LBW requires not only facility-based interventions but also broader community-level strategies addressing food security, maternal health education, and early pregnancy nutrition.



Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

7. Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)

Punjab has made commendable progress in introducing Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC), with 3,078 babies initiated into the program during FY 2023–24. Of these, over 2,100 were discharged per protocol, showing that facilities are increasingly adopting the practice. However, challenges remain: 605 babies died during KMC, and follow-up rates drop steeply after the first visit, with fewer than 650 babies completing a third follow-up. This weak adherence limits the program's potential impact on reducing neonatal mortality. To unlock the benefits of KMC, Punjab needs to strengthen community linkages, enhance caregiver counseling, and invest in long-term monitoring to ensure premature and LBW infants receive sustained care.



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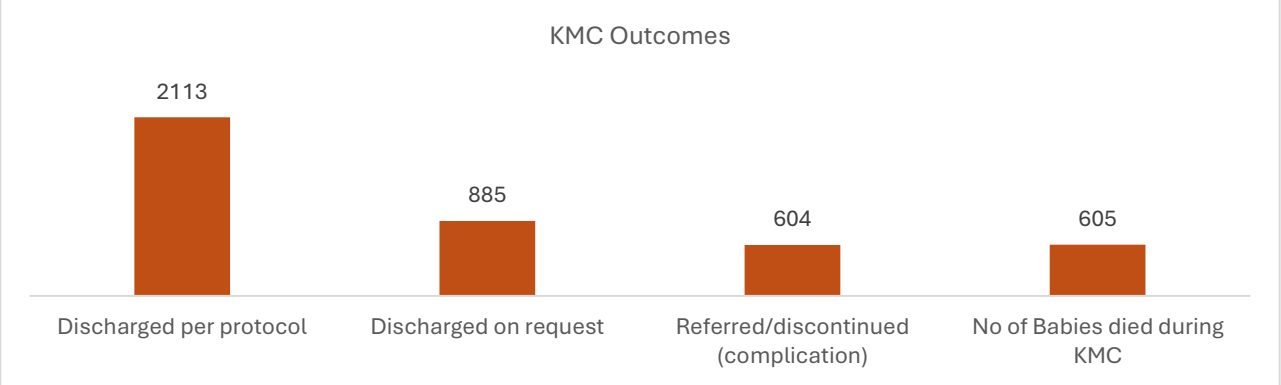

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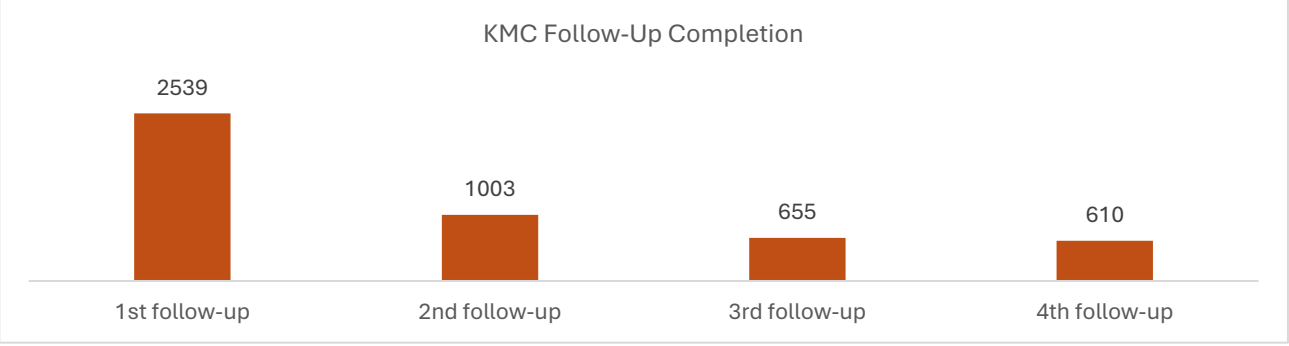

Source: Punjab Health Department, DHIS2 – Annual Report FY 2023–24 (Gallup Pakistan compilation).

8. Policy Implications

1. Quality of Care: High ANC and delivery coverage needs to translate into reduced complications and neonatal deaths.
2. Nutrition Interventions: Anemia and LBW prevalence highlight the need for maternal nutrition programs.
3. Neonatal & Newborn Care: Investments in neonatal intensive care, better obstetric management, and expansion of KMC follow-ups are critical.
4. Data Use: Routine DHIS2 monitoring should inform district-level targeting and resource allocation.

About the DHIS FY Report

This press release is based on the Annual Health Report FY 2023–24, compiled by the Punjab Health Department using the District Health Information System (DHIS2) platform. The DHIS2 reporting system consolidates data from all public sector health facilities across the province, ranging from Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) to Tehsil and District Headquarters Hospitals (THQs and DHQs) and tertiary care institutions.

The report serves as the official record of Punjab's health system performance, capturing patient volumes, disease patterns, maternal and child health indicators, emergency services, diagnostic use, medicine availability, human resources, and immunization coverage. For this edition, Gallup Pakistan extracted and analyzed the sections specific to Outpatient Department (OPD) disease patterns, including the top 10 reported conditions, communicable and non-communicable disease shares, and outbreak-prone illnesses.

All data points presented here are directly sourced from the provincial DHIS2 system and reflect cases reported during FY 2023–24. No estimations or extrapolations have been introduced. Where comparisons across years or districts are not available in the report, related sub-sections have been omitted to maintain accuracy. Gallup Pakistan's contribution is the restructuring, visualization, and interpretation of the data for wider public, policy, and media use.

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand the Big Data Analysis project. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

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