In Somalia/Somaliland, the most common birth positions used at health facilities are the supine and lithotomy positions. Traditional birth attendants are more likely to encourage mothers to use comfortable upright positions according to their body signals. Due to cultural beliefs and practices around childbirth in Somalia/Somaliland, such as Afstanbah, there is no male involvement during pregnancy and delivery. There is no evidence that mothers and birth attendants are aware of and practice upright positions during childbirth.
PSI through its partners undertook qualitative research that sought to understand the existing perceptions and alternative birth positions among women and to assess the practices of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) as it relates to birthing positions. The research sought to determine which are the favourable birth positions for Somali mothers delivering at home and which birth positions services TBAs use during labor service at home.

**Research Design**

Conducted across three days in urban and rural areas of Somaliland

Targeted women of childbearing age (15-45 years) with experience in childbirth

Conducted 1 Focus group discussion with a total of 8 women, consisting of Mothers, TBA’s and Midwives

Spoke to 3 midwives, 3TBAs and 2 obstetric practitioners.

Conducted 9 In-depth interviews

Interviews were conducted within households, MCH, hospitals and a restaurant venue for the FGD.

**Findings**

Preference for birthing position is influenced by mothers first delivery experience

Mothers fear disclosing their preference for an alternative position at health facilities

Awareness of alternative positions is dependent on the birth attendant

Alternative positions are associated with the presence of a birth assistant familiar to the mothers

Alternative positions are physically more comfortable for mothers