

## “RMF CLINICIAN SAVES THE LIFE OF A SUPERSTITIOUS WOMAN”



Figure 1 RMF clinician Laxmi inserting an IV

Mina Kunwar is a 48-year-old woman who was suffering from loose stools multiple times a day. Her condition was getting worse, as she had several episodes of vomiting too. Instead of visiting a local health facility or health professional, she and her family opted to call for a traditional healer, or “Dhami.” He offered sacred offerings to different gods and goddesses to satisfy them and drive the evil force away so that Mina’s condition would be better, but all the ceremonies were in vain, and Mina’s condition continued deteriorating instead of improving. She was not given water to drink, as her family thought the more water she drank, the more episodes of loose stools she would suffer. Superstition still thrives in the rural areas of Nepal, which leads to increased morbidity and mortality.

When Mina’s condition did not improve after the Dhami’s offerings, her family members finally decided to take her to the RMF clinic in Arupokhari, the nearest health center to their home. RMF clinician Laxmi received Mina and upon assessment found that she was moderately dehydrated and her condition was worsening. Acting promptly, Laxmi inserted an IV for Mina and infused two pints of Ringer’s lactate

solution. The results were immediately seen; Mina visibly started to feel better. She was also given metronidazole and ciprofloxacin in injectable forms.

Mina was allowed to drink oral rehydration solution as well. At first, she refused to drink, fearing that she would have more loose stools, but once she was counseled about the role of the solution in treatment of loose stools, she quickly understood and drank the therapy she was given. After a few hours, when her condition was more stable, she was discharged from the clinic. Mina and her daughter-in-law wondered at how ignorant they had been about the illness. Mina said that the bottles of saline worked magic on her, and now she would visit the RMF clinic any time she fell ill, rather than visiting the traditional healer. She was very grateful when she left. Through prompt treatment and effective counseling, RMF's clinician once again proved her efficiency in overcoming the superstitions that prevail in rural society.

Altogether, 7,062 patients benefitted from health services provided by the RMF Health Clinic in the year 2017. Quality, around-the-clock services and the availability of affordable medications have been key factors in the RMF clinic's growing popularity, both in the village of Arupokhari and surrounding communities.