A HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING APPROACH TO IMPROVE NUTRITION OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEWBORNS IN ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND SENEGAL.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Coverage of nutrition interventions for pregnant women is poor, but potential for improvement is limited where health systems are weak. We implemented Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys to identify key individuals/factors influencing demand and use. Methods: As part of the baseline surveys, we randomly selected women with children 0-11months. Using mixed methods, we assessed current KAP surrounding nutrition in antenatal care. Results: We identified gaps in the provision and utilization of services, particularly antenatal care (ANC), iron-folic acid supplements (IFA), among others. The proportion of women who had attended 4 ANC visits during pregnancy was 4.8% in Ethiopia, 43% in Kenya, and 14% in Senegal; about a fifth in Ethiopia and Kenya and 31.9% in Senegal attended ANC in the first trimester. Only 3.4% of women in Ethiopia, 36.7% in Kenya and 52.6% in Senegal had taken ≥90 IFA tablets during pregnancy. Qualitative data found that knowledge and attitudes of women regarding care seeking for ANC and benefits of IFA during pregnancy period was low. Conclusion: In all 3 countries, but particularly Ethiopia, health and nutrition services for pregnant women and newborns are under-utilized. This evaluation revealed demand side barriers that are now being addressed as part of the on-going program.

BACKGROUND

• Coverage of nutrition interventions for pregnant women is poor, but potential for improvement is limited where health systems are weak.
• The Community-based Maternal and Newborn Health and Nutrition (CBMNH) program aims to increase utilization and quality of health and nutrition services for pregnant women and newborns by strengthening health systems.

OBJECTIVES

The program’s focus is on increasing demand for prenatal and birth services. As such we implemented Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys to identify key individuals/factors influencing demand and use in Kenya, Ethiopia and Senegal. This presentation focuses on practices, particularly related to antenatal care (ANC) and iron-folic acid supplements (IFA).

METHODS

• As part of the baseline surveys, we randomly selected women with children 0-11months.
• Using mixed methods, we assessed current KAP surrounding nutrition in antenatal care with a focus on assessing baseline status of the intervention and comparison districts. Quantitative data provided baseline data that will be used to measure impact.
• Qualitative data will be used to understand and contextualize impact (or lack of impact).
• The Qualitative component of the baseline supports and provides further insights into the quantitative results.

RESULTS

• We identified gaps in the provision and utilization of services, particularly ANC and IFA.
• Qualitative data found that knowledge and attitudes of women regarding care seeking for ANC and benefits of IFA during pregnancy period were low.

TABLE 1: WOMEN WITH CHILDREN 0-11 MONTHS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INTERVENTION (n)</th>
<th>COMPARISON (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETHIOPIA</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENYA</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENEGAL</td>
<td>1444</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

In all 3 countries, but particularly Ethiopia, health and nutrition services for pregnant women and newborns are under-utilized. The proportion of women who had attended 4 ANC visits during pregnancy was 4.8% in Ethiopia, 43% in Kenya, and 14% in Senegal.

This evaluation revealed both demand side barriers that are now being addressed as part of the on-going program.

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