

Increasing ANC utilization – a qualitative realistic evaluation on the role of health facility Quality Improvement in Southern districts of Tanzania

Authors: Abdallah Gumi¹, Mkumbo Elibariki¹, Mlaguzi Mwanaidi¹, Kionga Yusuf¹, Zamoyoni Julius¹ and Manzi Fatuma¹

¹Ifakara Health Institute, Tanzania.

Introduction

In the era of Sustainable Development Goals, pregnancy-related preventable morbidity and mortality remains unacceptable high. The World Health Organizations (WHO) recommends every pregnant woman and newborn to have received quality care from pregnancy, delivery to postnatal period for improved health outcomes and greater efficiency in health-care service delivery. Studies from developed countries and more coming from developing countries have shown that implementation of quality improvement (QI) approaches on health care led to better outcome. Whereas ANC provides an opportunity for essential health-care function to take place, insufficient ANC plays great role of misdiagnosis of danger signs or late referral for emergency obstetric care, resulting to maternal morbidity and mortality. In environment where health facilities staff receive and implement quality improvement strategies, the possible effects of quality improvement are highly determined by staff's understanding, responsibilities and level of participation. In effort to scale-up quality improvement initiative, QUADS (Quality Improvement in maternal and newborn health At District Scale) project has been implemented in four Councils in Mtwara region, Southern Tanzania to address the quality improvement gap on provision of maternal and newborn care at health facilities. Here we present findings of the performance of QI intervention at health facilities and its outcome to community in utilization of ANC services.

Method

A total of 29 health facilities in four Councils of Mtwara region are implementing Quality Improvement through QUADS project since 2016 to date. The staffs receive quarterly learning sessions of quality improvements techniques and monthly follow up visits for mentoring and coaching. A realistic evaluation was conducted on 19 sampled high, medium and low performer health facilities to evaluate the outcome of quality improvement implementation at health facilities level.

Results

Majority of health facilities reported an increasing community utilization of ANC quality services at health facilities as a results of quality improvement intervention implementation.

Conclusion

Quality improvement approaches has important contribution in increasing uptake of services like ANC utilization at health facilities. Scaling-up the quality improvement through the routine health system is important to increase the gains on health system strengthening and improved health outcomes.