

Effectiveness of Phone-Based Communication and Follow up on Uptake of Maternal Health Services

WHAT IS M-HEALTH?

M-Health is the use of mobile communication technologies in health care. Access to communication and information is one of the several essential components to improve health services uptake. M-Health can be used to improve healthcare service delivery by facilitating communication between health care providers and clients.

THIS RESEARCH

The aim of this research was to determine the effectiveness of phone-based communication and follow up in increasing uptake of maternal health services in the continuum of maternal health care (Antenatal Care, Institutional Delivery Service, and Postnatal Care). Paired cluster RCT study design was employed. Health centers were paired with their respective catchments/clusters, and then allocated into two arms using simple randomization. Two hundred and twenty pregnant women were recruited from the respective health facilities and enrolled to intervention (110) and control (110) groups from March to October 2020. Women in the intervention group received phone-based follow-up, appointment reminder, next visit service information, consultation, and emergency call response services either through text messages (for literate) or a phone call for those who were unable to read and write. Women in the control group received the usual service only.

KEY FINDINGS

- Dropout rate difference between control and intervention group was 38.2%, 40 %, and 19.1% for ANC 2, ANC3 and ANC4 visits respectively. The net effect of the intervention on dropout rate of institutional delivery was 21.8% between these comparison groups.
- Knowledge and perceived quality of care increased by 41.8% and 17.3% respectively in the intervention group, while no significant increment observed in the counterparts.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

This research found that phone-based communication resulted in decreased drop-out rate throughout the continuum of maternal health care, and increased knowledge and perceived quality of care. Integrating the use of m-health into the existing maternal health service delivery mode could increase uptake of maternal health services.

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