

The role of nutrition steering and technical committees on the quality of Growth Monitoring Program in Central Gondar zone, Northwest Ethiopia

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What is the Growth Monitoring Program?

The growth monitoring program (GMP) is a preventive program that targets the reduction of malnutrition in children in the early in life, especially in children under the age of two years. However, effective growth monitoring activities are not easily implemented and local realities are not often considered when making decisions about its inclusion in national programs.

Objectives

To assess the participation rate in the GMP, the proportion of children faltering, and the functionality of nutrition steering and technical committees in the GMP in the selected district of the central Gondar zone.

Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from district steering and technical committees. Purposive sampling was used to select the study participants. The lists of the two committees were found from each district health office and after identification of the person, the interview was conducted face-to-face. Data extraction sheet and in-depth interview guide were developed for both quantitative (secondary data) and qualitative parts, respectively. The secondary data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Thematic content analysis was employed for qualitative data analysis.

Key findings

The overall average participation in GMP was 44.9% in Gondar Zuria and 50.6% in East Demiba districts, both of which fell below the global recommendation of 80%. Similarly, the proportion of children faltering in Gondar Zuria District was much higher (2.85%) than East Dembia district (0.48%). Reporting rate among health facilities in the two districts ranged from 33-66% in the study area, falling below the global recommendation of 75%. Only 3.2% of the health facilities in the study area conducted community conversation after weighed. Nearly half (47.7%) of the mothers had good knowledge of the GMP. According to the in-depth interviewees, nutrition technical and steering committees were not functional.

Program implications

The participation rate of children, community conversation, and reporting rates in GMP programs are low. All materials required for GMP were not available and the nutrition technical and steering committees are not fully functional. Thus, strengthening the existing steering and technical committees, providing refreshment training, and ensuring that all necessary materials are available to health care professionals is vital.

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