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Introduction

Nigeria accounts for 19% of global maternal deaths in 2015 [1]. The majority of these deaths occur in rural communities as a result of unskilled care during pregnancy and childbirth. Policymakers in Nigeria recognize that primary healthcare (PHC) should play a key role in improving access to skilled pregnancy care, but PHC is often poorly utilized [2]. This research aims to identify and document the role of evidence-based advocacy in improving access to skilled pregnancy care in PHCs in two rural Local Government Areas, Esan South East and Etsako East of Edo state, Nigeria.

Methods

- ❖ The Research – Three-phase intervention study: Baseline, Intervention and Evaluation driven by advocacy as a core strategy
- ❖ Evidence for advocacy was generated through baseline mixed method research.
- ❖ Presentation of evidence to community stakeholders and policy makers for a buy in to the project, support, ownership and active involvement in designing and implementing intervention activities.

Advocacy process/Steps

- ❖ Stakeholder mapping
- ❖ Meetings with traditional rulers
- ❖ Community conversation with elders. – presenting the problem of access to skilled pregnancy care and getting them to proffer and commit to the solution

Advocacy visits to: Edo State Executive Governor, State Primary Health care Development Agency, Commissioner of Health and Local Government Council.

Results

- ❖ Increased commitment by the Edo State Government leading to the prioritization of improved delivery of PHC in the State;
- ❖ Deployment of Youth Corp doctor for PHC services in the IMCHA project communities;
- ❖ Community Health Fund for free maternal and child care
- ❖ Implementation of community-led Drug Revolving Fund;
- ❖ Implementation of RapidSMS - enables effective and real-time two-way communication between a pregnant woman in distress, the Ward Development Chairman (WDC), Transporter and primary health care workers for action, using a mobile device.
- ❖ RapidSMS – support from Edo State Government; funding support from West African Health Organisation through the Federal Ministry of Health
- ❖ Donation of 2 Tricycle Ambulance by Edo State Government through the Local Government Council to IMCHA project PHCs.
- ❖ Regular Community health education driven by the WDC and Traditional rulers



Fig 1. Advocacy visit to the Executive Governor of Edo State

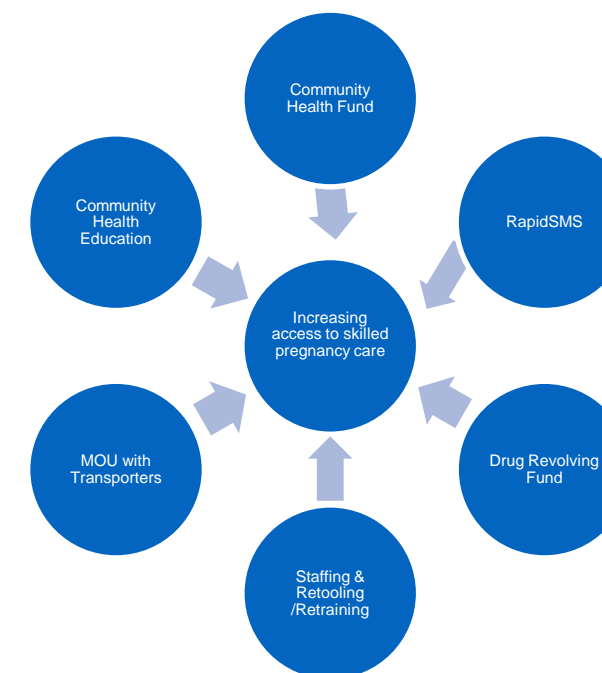


Fig 2: Community-led and Government Supported Intervention Activities

Short-term Outcomes

- ❖ Mid-term evaluation of this project indicate that within 12 months of implementation (January – December 2018),
- ❖ the number of women attending antenatal care in the project PHCs has increased by 250%;
- ❖ the number of women using the PHCs for delivery have also increased by 266%;
- ❖ post natal attendance has doubled.
- ❖ All referral cases have been successfully managed because of effective referral system and available transport arrangement.



Fig 3. Community Conversation with elders

Advocacy Impact - improving women's health

- ❖ Community conversations got the elders to see the need to increase women's access to skilled care during pregnancy
- ❖ Community health fund removes the burden of out-of-pocket expenses for medical care from women who hitherto depended on the partners to pay their medical bills.
- ❖ RapidSMS empowers women to seek and access timely care in emergency .
- ❖ Increase in government attention to revitalize PHCs in Edo State.



Fig 4. Ambulance donated by the government for IMCHA project

The Research Team

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