

Effect of nutrition training on improving the health extension worker's competency for promotion of maternal and child nutrition: a quasi-experimental study

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Health extension worker's competency

Maternal and childhood malnutrition is a significant public health concern, resulting in numerous pregnancies and childbirth complications. To counteract the burden, the Ethiopian government has applied various strategies, including incorporating nutrition promotion as one of the work packages of the health extension workers (HEWs). However, the provider's knowledge, promotion skill, and competency for promoting maternal and child nutrition remain poor.

Objectives

To enhance the HEWs' capacity for the promotion of maternal and child nutrition through evidence-based capacity-building training supported by promotion models.

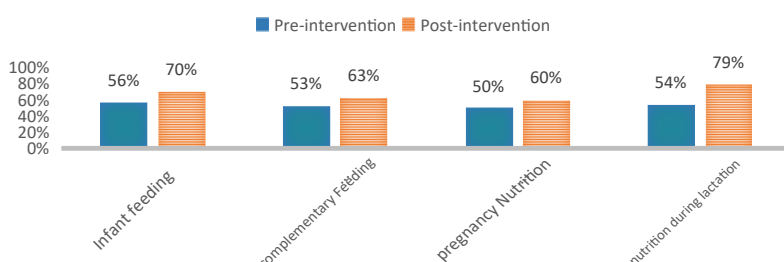
Methods

This was a quasi-experimental pre- and post-test study employed among 80 (for knowledge) and 78 (for counseling skill) HEWs in the Central Gondar zone, Amhara region in 2021. A baseline study was conducted to assess the knowledge and counseling skills of the HEWs using a self-administered questionnaire and observational checklist, respectively. The intervention was comprised of real environment training and coaching for four days. Further, the Greet, Ask, Listen, Identify, Discuss, Recommend, Agree, and Appointment (GALIDRA) framework along with Pender's health promotion model, was applied to enhance HEW promotion skill. A post-test aimed at assessing the knowledge, promotion skill, and counseling competency improvement was conducted and the results were compared using a t-test and McNemar test.

Key findings

- The HEWs' knowledge about maternal and child nutrition has been improved after the training.
- The training improved the HEWs' promotion skills about maternal and child nutrition.
- The application of the promotion model (GALIDRA) improved.
- HEWs reported that promoting nutrition applying these models would bring a substantial behavioral change in the community. However, the application of the Pender health promotion model, in particular, takes time and require commitment although it's easy to adopt.

KNOWLEDGE ON KEY NUTRITION FACTORS AMONG HEWS



Program implications

The overall HEWs' knowledge about maternal and child nutrition was improved by the intervention. Similarly, participants have significantly shown an improvement in transferring key nutrition messages to the mothers/caregivers. The application of the GALIDRA model also improved the promotion skills of the participants. Therefore, nutrition training is crucial in enhancing the competency of HEWs' on maternal and child nutrition.

Acknowledgment

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