

Improving the Standards Based Management–

Recognition Initiative to Provide High Quality, Equitable Maternal Health Services in Malawi SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

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Increasing access and utilization of health care services is not sufficient for maternal health outcomes. However, health care providers should consider providing services that are safe, and of high quality if positive maternal and neonatal outcomes are to be achieved.

Problem

- The project aimed at addressing a key concern of the Malawian Ministry of Health (MOH), namely the persistence of a high maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 439/100,000 live births despite a facility birth rate of 73%.
- An audit of maternal deaths found that the majority of these deaths take place in facilities, indicating the facilities are either not providing the necessary care or its quality was suboptimal.
- Poor quality of care was recognized to be a major contributing factor to maternal morbidity and mortality

Research Focus

The Focus of this implementation research was to:-

- Identify the gaps between the SBM-R (RH) program and the ground reality across the Malawian healthcare context.
- Co-produce and test potential solutions to improve the effective implementation of the SBM-R (RH) initiative to enhance quality and equity of care provided in the health centers.

Research Focus

A. To identify the gaps between the SBM-R (RH) program and the ground reality across the Malawian healthcare context.

1. Document Reviews and in-depths interviews of Policy makers and key stakeholders
2. Assess facility readiness through structured observations using the Malawi MOH Integrated Performance Standards for Reproductive Health (MIPS) checklists.
3. Assess provider adherence to standardised criteria of care through structured clinical observations.
4. Assess women's experiences of care through exit interviews will be conducted with women
5. Identify contextual factors affecting quality of care through organisational ethnography (Observations, in-depth interviews)

Findings

Contextual factors affecting quality of maternal Health Services include:-

- Staff shortages and lack of resources
- Inadequate resources (medical equipment, supplies and infrastructure)
- leadership and management challenges
- Lack of organizational culture of quality

Research focus

B. To Co-produce and test potential solutions

1. Benchmarking visit
2. Quality Management Training
3. Provision of Quality improvement materials (5s and Infection prevention)
4. Monitoring and supervision

Research Focus



Bench-marking visit on Quality Improvement

Research Focus



Quality management training for Health care Providers

Research Focus



Distribution of quality improvement materials to health facilities

Results

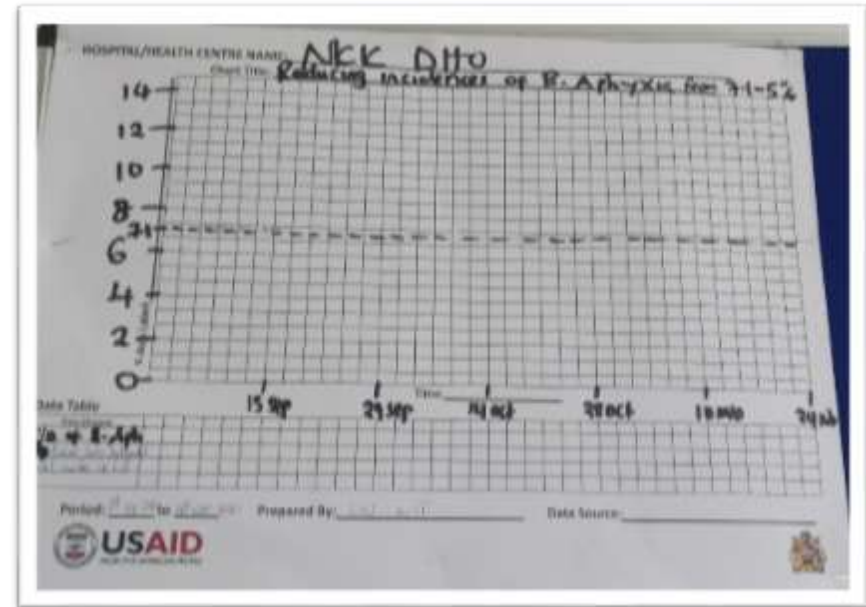
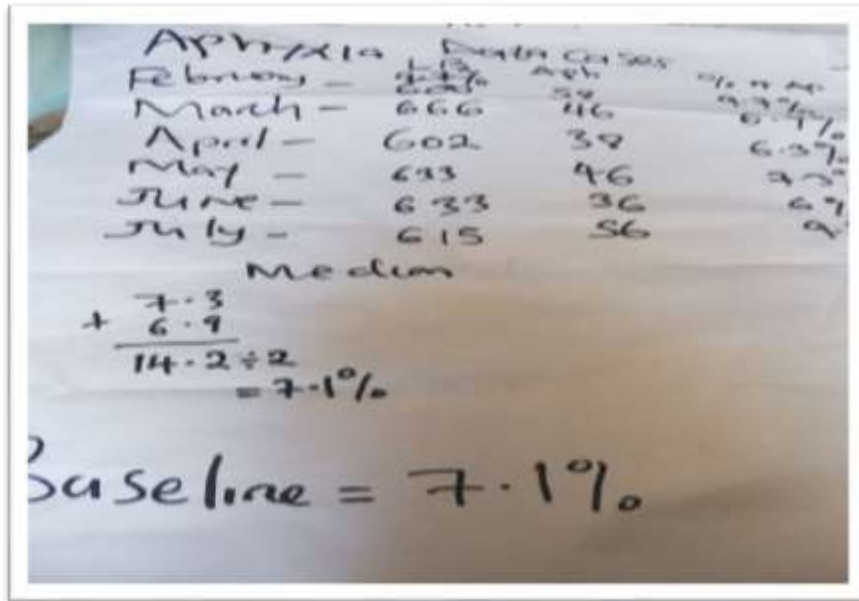
1. Improvements in work environment using 5s Kaizen



Results

2. Implementation of Quality improvement Projects

The facilities reviewed their facility data and identified gaps in service delivery for quality improvement projects.



Results

3. **Strengthened Quality Improvement Teams (QISTs AND WITs)**

- Meetings/Orientations with Facility Management and other health care workers
- Formulation/Revamping of Quality Improvement Teams
- Formulation/ Strengthening of Quality Improvement plans

Challenges

- There are limited resources
- Few health workers are trained on Total Quality Management.
- There is limited mentorship and supervision

Lessons learned

- Quality improvement is a more complex issue as it has multiple determinants and is impossible to address from one perspective. Different stakeholders should be aware of their roles in achieving quality improvement and be committed to doing their part.
- Leadership and management Teams play a big role in quality improvement and quality management
- Sustainability of quality improvement activities is key in quality management. As such, health facilities should be empowered to build their capacity to sustain their activities in the absence of external funding.

Application of the Innovations

Guiding questions

Is there an opportunity for scale-up, if so, how? Highlight only the priority areas (three are enough)

At the moment no opportunity for scale up.

If resources available;

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