

Summary of “Acceptability and feasibility of video-based health education for maternal and infant health in Dirashe District, South Ethiopia: A qualitative study”

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Maternal mortality remains high despite the fact that Ethiopia has adopted World Health Organization ANC guidelines in 2004. One of the main reasons is the limited coverage of ANC caused by resource shortages and lack of training and policy clarity. Behavior change communication (BCC) plays a vital role in improving maternal and child nutrition, and video-based health education is being tested as an innovative method to reach more people effectively. A study in Ethiopia assessed the effects of video-based BCC on pregnant mothers and infants' nutrition, highlighting the importance of acceptability and feasibility for successful interventions. The study aimed to identify opportunities and challenges in implementing video-based health education in a local context.

The study was conducted in the Dirashe District, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia. It involved a cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) with two cohorts of 580 eligible pregnant women, followed from three months of pregnancy to six months postpartum. The participants were recruited between October 2020 and January 2021, and the follow-up period extended until February 2022. Rural communities were randomly assigned to receive health and nutritional education through either a video-based approach (Health-Video) or standard counseling (Control). Women in their first trimester, aged 18 or above, permanent residents in the study area, and willing to participate for the entire 12-month period were invited to participate.

The study found that the video-based health education intervention was well accepted and feasible, based on the conventional and SAFE guidelines used for measuring feasibility. It proves to be a promising alternative method for behavior change communication aimed at mothers and their infants. If successfully scaled up, this intervention has the potential to address logistical barriers and improve community and husband support. However, to ensure effectiveness, some of the messages should be tested for feasibility and acceptability to tailor them to local contexts and ensure relevance and impact.

The sustainability of any intervention relies on its ability to incorporate future improvement areas and address challenges. In this study, participants provided recommendations for improving the video-based health education intervention such as assigning a designated place for video projection, involving the husband/partner - they emphasized that their support is crucial to enhance support

and cooperation in promoting maternal and child health. Integrating the intervention into the health system through Health Extension Workers (HEWs) was also among recommendations.

Although the research had significant results such as increased birth weight and birth length, increased maternal Hb near delivery, and reduced anemia near delivery, by addressing improvement areas above and incorporating them, the intervention stands a better chance of long-term sustainability and positive impact on maternal and child health in the community.