

Maternal Nutrition

IN GOVERNMENT ANC SERVICES

ETHIOPIA

The national government maternal nutrition guidelines include maternal nutrition and IFA counseling; IFA distribution and stock monitoring; weight gain monitoring; and breastfeeding counseling. Yet coverage and quality of these interventions remains low. A&T's implementation research being carried out in Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) and Somali regions tests the integration of an intensive package of interventions into existing ANC services to address these gaps.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Clustered RCT cross-sectional baseline and endline

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is it feasible to integrate locally relevant maternal nutrition interventions into existing public ANC programs?
- Can maternal nutrition knowledge and practices be improved by integrating nutrition-focused SBC and systems strengthening approaches into existing ANC services?
- What factors affect effective integration of maternal nutrition interventions into ANC?
- What are the barriers and opportunities for completing eight ANC visits and how do they affect the delivery of the maternal nutrition package?

OUTCOMES

1. Improved knowledge and practices pertaining to:
 - Dietary diversity (MDD-W) among pregnant women
 - IFA supplement intake during pregnancy
 - Weight gain during pregnancy
 - Early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding
2. Evidence that will inform national policies and program learning:
 - Identify barriers and opportunities for the integration of maternal nutrition in ANC contacts and ensuring quality of service delivery

TIMELINE

Baseline: December 2019

Endline: April 2021

THE INTERVENTION

Additional nutrition services

- Intensified counselling on dietary diversity, diet quality during pregnancy, breastfeeding, IFA supplements, and managing side effects
- Support for strengthened government supply and distribution of IFA
- Weight gain monitoring linked to messages about healthy diet, adequate rest, and the dangers of excessive weight gain

Community activities

- MIYCN training for community volunteers and kebele leaders
- Process for early identification and referral of pregnant women
- Monthly pregnant women conference
- Home visits by community volunteers and health extension workers to provide counseling on diet quality, breastfeeding, daily IFA consumption, and managing side effects
- Mobilization activities for husbands and mothers-in-law to support pregnant women

Health system support

- Training on MIYCN services to implement during ANC
- Provision of locally tailored counseling and monitoring tools
- Training on using data registers and mother's cards, including review of data to identify gaps in coverage of services
- Support to conduct monthly supervision and stock balance inventory
- Monthly cluster-level data review sessions
- Quarterly district level performance review and feedback sessions