

Maternal Nutrition

IN GOVERNMENT ANC SERVICES

INDIA

Despite national policy guidance based on global ANC guidelines, a streamlined package of proven maternal nutrition services—IFA and calcium supplementation, counseling on maternal diet, weight measurement, and counseling on breastfeeding—does not reach most women during pregnancy. In Uttar Pradesh, less than one-quarter of women received even four ANC visits, and IFA consumption is very low. A&T’s implementation research tested strengthening the approach to current ANC services under the Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCHA) program to improve coverage as well as maternal and child outcomes.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Cluster-randomized design with cross-sectional surveys at baseline and endline, and a repeated-measures longitudinal study; qualitative study on implementation; and cost of diet survey

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Can the coverage and utilization of maternal nutrition interventions be improved under the RMNCHA program?
- What factors affect effective integration of maternal nutrition interventions into the ANC platform under the RMNCHA program?
- What are the impacts of interventions on knowledge and practices?

OUTCOMES

Improved knowledge and practices pertaining to:

- Dietary diversity during pregnancy (MDD-W)
- Adequate protein, energy and micronutrient intake
- Intake of IFA and calcium supplements
- Early initiation of breastfeeding
- Gestational weight gain
- Anemia

TIMELINE

Baseline: December 2017

Endline: April 2019

THE INTERVENTION

Additional nutrition services

- At-home food demonstrations
- Peer group problem-solving discussions
- IFA and calcium family counseling at home visits
- Weight check and weight gain chart for at-home use
- Micronutrient, diet and weight gain reminder messages
- Counseling focused on maternal nutrition and early initiation of breastfeeding

Community mobilization

- Husbands’ forums with video (Ratri Chaupal)
- Village Health and Nutrition Days (VHND)
- Community sensitization sessions with leaders and local doctors

Health system support

- Training and monthly refreshers
- Materials from training and job aid
- Supervision visits from government and project staff
- Supervision checklist and feedback during visits
- Support for IFA and Calcium procurement