

The Role of Maternal Health Influencers in Activating the Agency of Women of Reproductive Age and Their Partners for Better Healthcare Seeking.

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What we did, Findings, Potential Effect

Baseline Qualitative Assessment

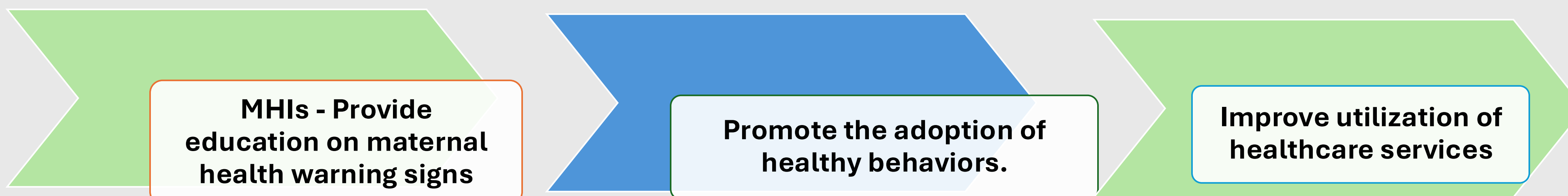
- 897 Households Sampled
 - 471 Households in 23 Wards (Lagos)
 - 426 Households in 12 Wards (Kaduna)



67% Insufficient knowledge of critical maternal danger signs

Adverse maternal health outcomes resulting from poor health-seeking behaviour.

What is the role of Maternal Health Influencers (MHIs)?



Several studies have shown the relationship between low health literacy and poor maternal health outcomes (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29052533/>). Educating WRA, their male partners, and other key decision influencers, such as mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, sisters, brothers, and religious leaders can help mitigate these risks and promote timely and autonomous maternal health decisions for improved health outcomes.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

- Explore the impact of MHI's in activating the agency of women and their partners.
- Evaluate Project Aisha's influence on maternal health knowledge and behaviors.
- Gather insights on community practices and understanding of maternal health.

Methodology

Stakeholder Collaboration:

- Collaborated with LGHA & community leaders in identifying, training and deployment of 20 MHIs to focal LGAs (Epe, Ifako Ijaiye in Lagos; Zaria in Kaduna).
- Co-developed educational fliers with Lagos SMOH and PHCB.

Facility Utilization:

- MHIs referred WRA to health facilities for ANC, delivery, and postnatal services.
- MHI followed up referred WRA by in-person visits, calls, texts, and WhatsApp.

Follow-up Services:

- Disseminated follow-up structured automated weekly bulk SMSs to individuals uniquely reached by MHIs.

Case Study: Follow-up Qualitative Assessment (FGD) on the Impact of Project Aisha's Maternal Health Awareness and Education Intervention in Lagos State.

Methodology: Focus group discussions with women and men groups

Participant Selection: Purposive sampling for diverse representation of participants.

Survey location: Ifako Ijaiye LGA of Lagos State

Findings Among Women's Group:

- Increased Maternal Health awareness attributed to the MHI sensitization.
- Improved Utilization of Health Facilities related to knowledge.
- Improved Birth Preparedness: Women reported proactively preparing for delivery.

Findings Among Men's Group:

- Improved Knowledge and Greater Awareness of the need for their involvement in women's health.
- Positive Attitude Shift towards health decisions and needed support during pregnancy and delivery.

Female respondent

"Before the awareness, I didn't know that bleeding during pregnancy was a very dangerous thing. Now I always visit the clinic each time I observe this sign."

Male respondent

"I make sure we save money and have transport ready in case we need to go to the hospital quickly."

Call to Action:

- Scale up community sensitization to RMNCAH through MHIs.
- Integrate MHI activities into the CHIPS program in Kaduna and Lagos.
- Collaborate with health partners to build on these gains.

Conclusion

Project Aisha's MHIs have enhanced healthcare-seeking behaviors and maternal health outcomes. To further address barriers and accelerate progress, expanded male engagement is essential.

Results



48,150 individuals were engaged by the MHIs.



Distributed 24,381 educational fliers.



MHIs referred 439 WRA to health facilities



37% increase in TBA referrals

MHIs educated TBA ANC 1 clients danger signs & promoted dual registration

Socio-demography of Reach by Dec'24

