

THE NEW CONCEPT OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH. A PRIMARY HEALTH CARE INTERVENTION STUDY.

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Abstract

This study is an intervention study, conducted in six different locations ; two in Cairo, Alexandria, Upper Egypt (Fayoum) and Lower Egypt (Behera and Mansoura). A total of 124 primary health care (PHC) physician participated in this study. The objective is supporting PHC activities; through strengthening physician's knowledge necessary to implement a high quality service as regards reproductive health. The study was implemented in three phases: preliminary assessment phase, implementation phase and evaluation phase. Results of the study revealed that the mean scores of the preliminary assessment was low in almost all categories under investigation. Health education and communication, reproductive health program components , reproductive morbidity and breast feeding and child nutrition recorded the lowest mean scores. On the other hand reproductive choice (family planning) recorded the highest mean score. The mean score of the final assessment recorded the highest score in reproductive health program components, health education and communication, growth and development and reproductive morbidity. The difference between the preliminary and final assessment showed statistical significance in all topics except reproductive choice and team building. We conclude from this study that achieving the goals of reproductive health in primary health care necessitates adopting a holistic approach to be directed to a broader concern for individual needs of women, thus widening its strategy from providing family planning only to including reproductive health services, The underlying philosophy for improving the quality of care urges the need to ensure that the health care providers have the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are responsive to the client's needs. We also emphasize, that training of primary health care providers in health education and communication skills is highly recommended.

Introduction

The 1995-2000 five year country program comprised of seven projects : (1) Health and Nutrition; (2) Water, Environment and Sanitation; (3) Education; (4) Area -based Community Development; (5) Women in Development; (6) Social Mobilization and Communication; (7) Monitoring and Evaluation. The country program was developed on the basis of the problems identified in the situation analysis and reflects the lessons learned from the past experience (UNICEF,1998).

Today, women's health is addressed as a key component of quality of life. Recently strong voices have come forward from health advocates supporting a broader view of the domain of women's health. A

focus on reproductive health is adopted which encompasses the social, psychological and physical aspects of women as affected by the reproductive process (Zurayk, 1994), therefor reproductive health is defined as a state of complete physical , mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes (ICPD, 1994).

In Egypt, despite the wide spread network of the health facilities and the improvement in some health indicators, The Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) is facing barriers that could have negative impact on the quality and effectiveness of the derived health services (MOH,CSP&USAID,1994). Successful