

Sub-theme: Engaging power and politics in promoting health and public value

Field-building dimension: Innovative research approaches and measures

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Title: Approach to developing stakeholder-informed and evidence-based task-shifting strategies to improve health services for sick newborns in Kenya.

Purpose

A set of key health system challenges undermine newborn survival in low-income settings. These include limited access to quality care for sick newborns requiring inpatient services 24 hours a day throughout lengthy admissions and inadequate availability of appropriately skilled human resources. Task-shifting may be an effective policy option for reducing the current strain on nursing care for sick newborns in low-income settings. However, success is more likely if task-shifting approaches are based on the values, preferences, knowledge and skills of stakeholders, and on the feasibility and applicability of the intervention for particular settings and healthcare systems.

The purpose of this presentation is to describe an ongoing research programme in Kenya, which seeks to take a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the current state of care for sick newborns and how sustainable changes can be made. This work engages potentially influential professionals, as well as political groupings from the outset to help inform the design of contextually relevant strategies based on a broad understanding of stakeholder positions.

Focus/content

In this presentation, we propose to describe our approach to developing stakeholder-informed evidence-based policy for task-shifting strategies aimed at improving the care delivered to sick newborns in a low-resource setting. Our approach has four key phases: [1] Nursing ethnography and stakeholder analysis; [2] quantitative estimation of the gap between available and needed services and description of the quality gap between existing and desired services; [3] development of evidence-based neonatal standards of care, profiling of tasks performed by nurses, and description of missed care/rationing of care; and [4] design of policy options to close coverage and quality gaps for the care of sick newborns. Engagement of policy makers and participatory action research cuts across all phases. Implementation of this approach is ongoing within Nairobi City County, thus we will also draw on lessons so far learned.

Significance to sub-them/field-building dimension

This study provides a multidisciplinary approach to evidence-based policy aimed at improving health system design and facility-based newborn care. We will focus on how and why it is important to engage stakeholders and policy makers when designing health systems interventions. This work opens a new arena for the use of innovative methods in research on task-shifting.

Target audience

The target audience include researchers (multidisciplinary), policymakers, and medical professionals, particularly nurses. An audience with a mixture of experiences and perspectives from both high-income and low- and middle-income settings would be ideal for this discussion.