COUNSELLOR PROGRAM FOR SAVING SEVERELY MALNOURISHED CHILDREN BY IMPROVEMENT OF GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS OF MELGHAT : RESULT OF A FIELD TRIAL

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Background: Melghat is tribal area in India (population of 280 thousands)with high children mortality(U5MR>100/1000 live births) , malnutrition (>75%) and maternal mortality (>400 per 100000 population) due to poor hospitalisation . Due to bad government hospitals, hospitalisation of severely malnourished children (SAM) (< 1%) & hospital deliveries(< 5%) were very low. We developed counsellor program to improve hospitals & reduce children mortality and malnutrition .

Aims:

1. To increase hospitalisation of SAM babies & hospital deliveries by at least 35% in 14 government hospitals of Melghat over 3 years.
2. Govt. hospitals strengthening .Thereby reducing children & maternal deaths & malnutrition.

Methods: It was RCT. Intervention area were 14 government hospitals of Melghat (Amaravati, India). Control area were hospitals of Nadurbar and Gadchiroli.Study period : 2007-08 to 2009-10 .22 counsellors did counselling, BCC , motivation of patients , strengthening of hospitals, etc.

Results: Study resulted in proportional improvement among hospitalized malnourished children { (95% CI} by 96% (90.6 - 100)(Melghat) , 53.8% (26.7 - 80.9)(Gadchiroli) & 34% (21.2 - 46.7) (Nandurbar). It improved hospital deliveries & hospitalisation of SAM children by 212% & 1567% (Melghat), 72% & -70% (Gadchiroli) & 112% & -69.54% (Nandurbar) respectively in 2009-10 over baseline & Melghat Government hospitals .

Conclusions: Counsellor program resulted in statistically highly significant improvement in nutritional status of hospitalised SAM children of Melghat (**p-value: 0.0001**), increased hospital deliveries & hospitalisations of SAM children and reduced child and maternal deaths of Melghat. Changed health policies.