

Group Antenatal Care (G-ANC) model for improving women participation and engagement in antenatal care services: Mlinde mama implementation study in Geita.

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Introduction:

Group Antenatal Care (G-ANC) is a service delivery model where women with pregnancies of similar gestational age are brought together for ANC, incorporating information sharing and peer support. This model provides health care to women in the group at the same time during group visits, as well as creating a support group of women at a similar stage in pregnancy. Moreover, it emphasizes participation and engagement of women in the ANC process, ultimately leading to better retention in care. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of this model in improving women participation and engagement in ANC services in Geita region.

Methodology:

Pregnant women with GA below 24 weeks attending ANC at participating facilities are invited to form a group consisting of 8-15. These expectant mothers attend a series of five 90-minute meetings at an interval of four weeks apart. Meetings are facilitated by 1-2 HCPs using small group work, games, songs and illustration cards which engage women in discussions on pregnancy care key topics. Women sister up in small groups to conduct self-assessments using digital devices such as BP machine, thermometer, and weigh scales. These meetings are highly participatory, and each pregnant woman has a private clinical consultation and physical exam by the ANC provider including peer support. Mothers' records are kept for tracking, reminding for the next visit and follow-up of pregnancy risks.

Results:

Women conduct peer to peer assessment for blood pressure, weight, temperature, with the provider as a lead facilitator, to encourage their investment in self-care and care of the fetus. Additionally, women share pregnancy experiences.

Conclusion:

G-ANC model contributes to improving participation and engagement of women in ANC services and self-care.

Recommendation:

These initial findings inform the Government on the potential of GANC and its contribution in improving maternal health in Tanzania.