Development of community health nursing practice standards (CHNPS) for female health workers (ANMs) in Primary Health Centers of Dakshina Kannada(Mangaluru) district, Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Female health workers are the grass root level workers providing preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative health care services. Providing a quality health care service is an utmost important function to attain client satisfaction and in rendering safe services for which there is a need for standards. This study was undertaken to develop community health nursing standards for FHWs at PHC level and also to test the feasibility of implementing these standards.

Methodology: This methodological study using exploratory evaluatory design was conducted in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state, India. Cluster sampling technique was used to select 100 sub centres under study. The data was collected among female health workers, their supervisors and clients. Practice checklist was used to elicit self reported practices among 100 female health workers and observation of activities for 1050 hours; checklist was used to collect details of facilities/equipments at the sub centers; Satisfaction tool was used among clients. The developed standards were disseminated and after six months its effect in terms of practices and client satisfaction was determined. Opinionnaire on feasibility of implementing the developed community health nursing practice standards was found out among female health workers and supervisors.

Results: Findings revealed that the female health workers perform a wide range of activities and concentrated most of their activities around reproductive and child health. In almost all areas the availability of facilities was deficient in comparison with the Indian Public Health
Standards with just above half (52%) having moderate facilities and 34% with poor facilities. Only 8% had excellent and 6% had good facilities. Overall facilities were reported to be moderate (56.23%). On self reporting tool female health workers reported their overall practices as excellent in all the 4 areas of practice viz, Maternal health, Child health, Treatment Prevention control of diseases and Managerial responsibility. A significant difference was found between self reported and observed practices of female health workers (t=18.46, p<0.000) indicating over reporting of practices. On comparison of observed activities of female health workers before and after developing community health nursing practice standards, a significant difference (t=2.49, p<0.017) was found. A statistically significant difference was found in client satisfaction (t=5.35, p<0.0001) indicating that developed standards were effective in improving the overall practices of female health workers. Multivariate analysis with multiple regression found that among all the baseline variables only presence of male health worker in the sub centre was found to be significantly affecting practices of female health workers (p<0.004).

Similarly among clients baseline variables APL family status (p<0.039), distance to PHC (p<0.003), distance to sub centre (p<0.034), private health facility in the area (p<0.032) and access to ANM in emergency (p<0.001) were found to be significant. On collection of opinionnaire of hundred female health workers on practice of developed standards, most of the female health workers, 88% expressed the standards as highly feasible and 7% as feasible. Similarly 23(85%) supervisors expressed standards as highly feasible and 4(15%) as feasible.

**Conclusions:** The results of present study imply that standards setting initiatives made a significant contribution to community health nursing practices and the quality of services resulting in marked improvement in satisfaction levels. The study concludes that quality may be improved by paying more attention to the perspectives of clients, improving competencies and skills of providers and improving the working environment by better management, supplies & motivation of staff.

**Key-words:** Female health workers (auxiliary nurse midwife/ junior public health nurse), public health nursing services in India, sub centre services
and work environment, client satisfaction, standards of community health nursing practice.