

The significant role of traditional birth attendants in the maternity waiting home at Endulen hospital in rural Tanzania

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Abstract

Maternity waiting homes (MWH) aim to improve maternal and child outcomes in areas where access to health care facilities is limited due to geographical barriers¹. One attempt to address the high maternal mortality ratio found in Tanzania was by building a MWH at Endulen Hospital in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). Previous research has shown that the success of a MWH will depend on the quality of care present and acceptance from the community of which it serves^{1,3}. It was determined that focus group interviews would be conducted with key stakeholders of the MWH to determine what factors would influence its success in this Maasai community. Data was gathered from local community members through focus group interviews. A total of 10 interviews were conducted, with 5 groups of men and 5 groups of women. Each interview was conducted by a moderator and a translator. All 10 focus groups believed that TBAs should be allowed to go to the MWH with the women, for reasons such as knowledge and experience, helping with cooking and laundry, looking out for the Maasai culture, and breaking the language barrier between the Maasai and Swahili-speaking hospital staff. Although it was understood that the TBAs do not have formal training, it was evident that the Maasai community have a lot of trust in them and believe that they would be a great addition to the MWH. In order for the MWH in Endulen to have an impact on the MMR in the NCA, the opinions of the stakeholders must be addressed. If successful, this MWH can be used as a model for other MWH that are also serving populations living in rural areas.

References

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