

Improving 1st Trimester Antenatal Care Attendance in Rural Uganda: A Case Study of Localized Baby Showers in Luuka district, Bukendi health center III.

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Objectives

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a minimum of eight antenatal care (ANC) visits to reduce perinatal mortality and improve women's experience of care. In Uganda, only 29% of women attend their first ANC visit during the first trimester (DHS 2016).

Methods

To address this, the Solutions for People (S4P) Group implemented nine localized baby showers in Luuka district, aiming to increase ANC attendance in the first trimester, promote male partner involvement, and improve access to ANC services.



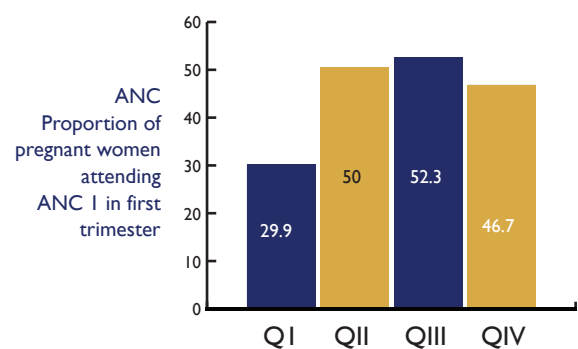
These baby showers engaged groups of 15-20 pregnant women and their male partners, celebrating upcoming births, facilitating experience sharing, and recognizing women who completed the recommended eight ANC visits.



Additionally, gatherings of women in their third trimester aimed to foster peer support and encourage early and consistent ANC attendance among women in earlier trimesters. These gatherings also facilitated communication between midwives and pregnant couples, addressed knowledge gaps, and brought ANC services closer to the community.



Village Health Teams (VHTs) conducted monthly home visits to identify and register pregnant women, facilitating their participation in the monthly localized baby shower events. The health facility's ANC in-charge collaborated by providing technical expertise and essential ANC services during the baby showers.



Results

The analysis of data from the health facility indicates that baby showers had a significant impact on improving women's attendance at recommended ANC visits during pregnancy.

Over 12 months in 2023, there was an 11.2% increase ($p < 0.05$) in the number of women attending ANC in their first trimester, demonstrating the effectiveness of baby showers in promoting awareness and encouraging adherence to essential healthcare services.

Conclusion

Innovations like localized baby showers are a promising intervention for improving ANC attendance in rural Uganda. They offer a holistic approach to ANC promotion that addresses the cultural, social, and health needs of women and their families. By embracing local traditions and beliefs, localized baby showers create a space for women to feel supported and empowered during one of the most important transitions in their lives.