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

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 poor socio-economic conditions & low-quality government hospitals, hospitalisation of severely malnourished children (SAM) (<1%), hospital deliveries (<5%) was very low. We developed counsellor program to improve hospitals & reduce children & maternal mortality and malnutrition.

Aims:

1. To increase the 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 and maternal deaths.

Methods:

It was RCT. The intervention area were 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:

Improvement in government hospitals of Melghat.

Comparison between government hospitals. (Percentage increment over baseline)

Indicators	Melghat	Gadchiroli	Nandurbar
Hospital delivery.	212	72	112
Hospitalisation (SAM children)	1350	-72	98

Hospitalisation (SAM children > 3 days) .	1567	-70	-69.54
Improvement in hospitalized SAM children.	4700	-80	38

Conclusions: The counsellor program resulted in statistically significant increase in hospital deliveries, hospitalisations of SAM babies and nutritional status improvement of SAM children of Melghat. It reduced many child and maternal deaths. It changed health policies of Melghat and will become state health policy.