



VIRTUAL ANTENATAL INTERVENTION FOR IMPROVED DIET AND IRON INTAKE (VALID)

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The prevalence of anaemia is highest in the Terai region of Nepal as compared to other ecological regions. Recent data from Nepal Health Demographic Survey and Nepal National Micro-nutrient Status Survey (NNMSS) show an increase in number of pregnant women taking Iron Folic Acid (IFA) supplements than previously but intake of the recommended numbers is still low. A mHealth intervention providing virtual counselling to pregnant women and family members on cause of anaemia during pregnancy, the importance of antenatal care (ANC) and IFA intake, and good dietary practices aimed to overcome barriers for behavior change in improving overall health of pregnant women. The study evaluated whether an antenatal virtual nutrition counselling to pregnant women increases compliance with IFA supplementation (compliance defined as consumption of IFA on 80% or more of the days between baseline and end line), compared with women who have access to routine ANC only (control).

RESEARCH DESIGN

- This was a randomized controlled trial conducted in Kapilbastu district.
- The main focus was on maternal and nutrition focused interventions.

KEY RESULTS

- Virtual Counselling can increase the consumption of iron-rich food and knowledge of strategies to enhance the bio-availability of iron.
- It is important to understand community readiness before implementing a mHealth intervention.

TESTING OUR RESILIENCE

This trial showcases our resilience in adapting to changing contexts. During COVID-19 pandemic when the implementation of originally planned intervention- home visits by trained counselors to engage pregnant women and family members in dialogical counseling on anaemia was no longer feasible, we switched to mHealth - delivering virtual counseling. This enabled us to continue fulfilling our objective to enhance family capacity to improve pregnant women's diet while testing the effectiveness of a novel virtual intervention among rural pregnant women generating evidence to guide future implementation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Empowering Women and Families
- Improving Access to Care for Marginalized groups
- Advancing technology - mhealth for improved maternal health and nutrition