A hybrid, effectiveness-implementation research study for female genital mutilation prevention and care in Guinea, Kenya and Somalia

Current Project Brief

Background

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a harmful practice that involves removal of healthy genital tissue and can lead to health consequences in the short and long term. Abandonment of this harmful practice requires multi-sectoral efforts, including in the health sector. Health care providers are respected members of their communities and can be important messengers of change in addition to providing essential health services. There is limited evidence, however, on what works to prevent FGM and how to deliver these interventions within the health sector.

Study countries

Guinea, Kenya and Somalia (Somaliland)

Methodology

• A cluster randomized trial using a hybrid effectiveness implementation research approach testing a two level package.
• A total of 180 primary antenatal care (ANC) clinics, 180 health care provider and 4,500 ANC clients across the three countries. Sixty primary care facilities in each country were randomly assigned to the intervention or control group.
• Both arms receive the Level 1 intervention package: (a) a Ministry of Health directive on FGM prevention and care posted in health facilities, (b) WHO FGM clinical guidelines, (c) WHO clinical handbook on FGM and (d) posters and information.
• Intervention sites also receive an innovative training package on person-centered communication for FGM prevention, delivered by trained trainers using a facilitator’s manual, training aids and an animated video that applies participatory training methods.

Objectives

To test the effectiveness of a complex intervention package aimed at health care providers in antenatal care (ANC) clinics at the primary health care level. The primary objectives are:

• To determine if the Level One intervention package improves facility preparedness and providers’ ability to deliver FGM prevention and care services
• To determine if the training package on person-centered communication for FGM prevention improves the delivery of FGM prevention communication by ANC providers to their clients

Research Partners

University of Nairobi (UoN), College of Health Sciences, Nairobi, Kenya; the Centre for Research on Reproductive Health in Guinea - Cellule de recherche en santé de la reproduction en Guinée (CERREGUI), Conakry, Guinea and Data and Research Solutions (DARS) Hargeisa, Somalia

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Research Products

- A facilitator guide, training aids, animated video for person-centered communication on FGM prevention finalized based on testing of field test version (field test version available upon request)
- WHO posters and other communications materials targeting health workers on FGM medicalization and provision of care
- SOP on conducting research during COVID-19
- Health facility directive template to encourage health workers to perform FGM care services and not conduct FGM practice (FGM Medicalization)

Study importance

Multi-sectoral efforts are needed to abandon FGM, but to date, there has not been evidence to guide the health sector on how to prevent this harmful practice. Evidence from this study can also guide ministries of health in policies, strategies and planning to improve FGM prevention and care activities for women and girls.

Sources of funding


Study dates

July 2020 to June 2021

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3 February 2021

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