Family Planning counseling during Nutrition Weeks (vitamin A, deworming) in Mali

Presented by: Lisa Nichols, MPH, Principal Associate

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In Mali 79% of postpartum women have an unmet need for family planning (DHS 2006).

Postpartum women have numerous contacts with the health system while seeking child health and nutrition services.

One opportunity is the National Nutrition Week (NNW) which is held every six months at fixed sites (CSCOM) and provides over 70% of women in the immediate postpartum period (IPP) with vitamin A and deworming. Mothers of children under five also participate.

The NNW provides an opportunity to integrate family planning interpersonal counseling (IPC) into nutrition activities and to mobilize IPP women who are potential clients for Family Planning.
Objectives

- Test integration and acceptance of FP messages with NNW setting; fixed site distribution
- Maintain low cost approach – counseling, targeting and not distribution of FP services
- Test nutrition link (exclusive breastfeeding, infant health) as a “gateway” to discussing return to fertility and explain family planning choices
- Test community, health center support roles for integrated approach
Background of Intervention

- ATN Plus is a consortium of five partner organizations – all of which contributed to the implementation of this activity.

- The pilot integration activity was implemented in two phases, July 2011 (in six health sub districts) and December 2011 (in 29 health sub districts/ community health centers) in San, Mali. Population: 366,000

- Activities were conducted by the Nutrition and Reproductive Health divisions of the MOH; local, district and regional MOH and Ministry of Social Affairs technicians, local radio operators, community leaders and civil society partners. Technical and financial support provided by USAID / ATN Plus.
Methodology

- Introductory and planning meetings with national, regional and district stakeholders
- Orientation of Community Health Center (CSCOM) technical directors, auxiliary midwives, relays, and radio station officials.
- Message development on IPPFP counseling; exclusive breastfeeding and return to fertility
- Messages broadcast on rural radio during NNW activities and interpersonal communication on FP
- During the IPPFP counseling, women were given a plastic ticket* which they presented at the health center for FP services after the NNWs.
- Follow up data collection on new FP users, qualitative survey in the health sub districts
Results

- Over **98% of IPP women reached by NNWs participated in interpersonal counseling sessions on FP**

- Difference in the number of new users from six months before pilot period (Jan-June 2011) compared to six months after pilot (Jan-June 2012) showed a significant increase (in some sub districts almost doubling).

- Local communities and stakeholders support along with the use of local radio for message broadcasting have been major success factors to the observed increase of new users of family planning

- Communities, providers and clients support the integration of Family planning and nutrition
Results by Sub districts

Total New Users: San

New Users

- sem 1 (2011)
- sem 1 (2012)
- sem 2 (2012)
Conclusions / Lessons Learned

- The success of the pilot activity demonstrated that women can receive family planning information in a child health / nutrition setting.
- The activity can be scaled up at low cost as women are already seeking nutrition services and the addition of FP counseling is feasible through messages on exclusive breastfeeding, return to fertility and the advantages of child spacing.
- Smart integration of several activities to reduce missed opportunities can increase service performance.
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- Stakeholders and representatives of local radio stations