

Communication Impact

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Consult & Choose: A client centered approach to family planning counseling leads to high patient satisfaction

Trust. Respect. Choice. Three key ingredients of effective family planning counseling. Yet for many women, a visit to a health center for family planning is more likely to include embarrassment, fear and confusion. A new initiative in Jordan is changing all that.

Background

The ability to choose the timing and spacing of births has numerous health benefits for women and children. These include reduced maternal mortality and morbidity, reduced infant mortality, HIV/AIDS prevention, reduced need for abortion and increased control by women over their lives (WHO, 2011). In Jordan, the majority of currently married women have a desire to limit or space their births but for 11% of women this need remains unmet, split between a need for spacing births (5 percent) and a need for limiting births (6 percent) (Department of Statistics, 2010).

My Life is More Beautiful “Hayati Ahla”

The “Hayati Ahla” family planning (FP) campaign was launched by the Jordan Health Communication Partnership (JHCP) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2007. Its aim is to increase the percentage of women using modern contraception. The campaign sought to:

- Create a sense of belonging among modern FP users
- Connect users with health centers
- Introduce counseling as a partnership between client and service provider
- Increase client-informed decision making and
- Reduce provider biases.

“The most challenging thing during counseling was helping the client choose a method. The Cue Cards made it easy and comprehensive.” (Midwife trained in CC)

The Consult & Choose Initiative (CC)

The CC Initiative produced a video modeling correct and incorrect interpersonal communication approaches and held training sessions with Ministry of Health (MOH) Maternal and Child Health (MCH) providers. The trainees reviewed effective counseling approaches and learned how to use the counseling communication tools. These included posters, the FP medical eligibility wheel, the providers’ handbook, cue cards for use with patients and take-home materials for clients.



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The Initiative also produced a video entitled “Hayati Ahla,” in collaboration with the MOH, that provides clear and succinct information about FP, including information about modern methods, reproductive health and the advantages of birth spacing, among other topics. The video was shown in sixteen health centers in Irbid Governorate, which is the second largest governorate in Jordan.

Measuring effectiveness

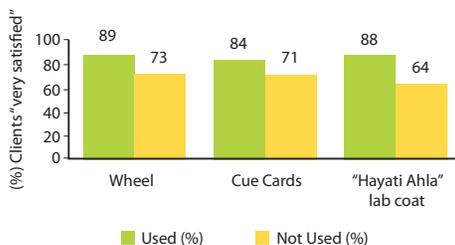
In 2011, the Initiative conducted exit interviews with 461 women in Irbid who visited one of 2 MCH centers that participated in the CC Initiative for FP counseling or follow-up.

High client satisfaction

The interviews found that client satisfaction with FP services at these centers was very high, with 95% of clients willing to recommend the center they had visited to their relatives or friends. 82% of women reported that they were very satisfied with their visit to the health center.

The use of CC communication materials appears to be an important factor in a client's satisfaction with her visit (see Figure 1). For example, among those who reported that the eligibility wheel was used during the visit, 89% reported being "very satisfied," compared to 73% of those who reported that the wheel was not used. Similarly, 84% of those who reported use of the cue cards were "very satisfied" compared to 71% of those who did not report use of the cue cards during their visit.

Figure 1: Satisfaction in association with the use of CC materials, Irbid Governorate, 2011



Similar levels of satisfaction were also found among 208 women in Zarqa Governorate, another CC Initiative site. In that region, 75% of women were very satisfied. Again, clients were more likely to be "very satisfied" when they reported use of CC materials during the visit.

Clients were also significantly more likely to be "very satisfied" when the provider followed the "Hayati Ahla" FP counseling guidelines (see Figure 2), demonstrating the importance of each step described in the consult and choose tools.

The fact that providers were significantly more likely to ask clients about their desired family size, explain the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods, and discuss side effects when they followed the "Hayati Ahla" counseling protocol is likely to have contributed to the overall satisfaction (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Satisfaction in association with provider counseling, Irbid Governorate, 2011

Defined satisfaction level as "very satisfied" (n=352)	Performed (%)	Not Performed (%)
Discussed how many children the beneficiary would like to have	87.7	66.9
Talked about advantages of birth spacing	83.0	71.0
Asked the beneficiary whether she had been thinking of a certain method before coming to the center	82.7	64.9
Explained various methods that were available	81.4	68.9
Made clear the advantages of different methods	82.2	67.3
Made clear the disadvantages of different methods	81.7	71.4
Talked about possible side effects	82.8	65.6
Explained how to manage side effects of chosen method	83.6	55.3

"Hayati Ahla" video has direct impact on FP intentions

The majority of women who reported watching the "Hayati Ahla" video reported that it affected them (85%), over one-third of whom reported that they will use FP methods as a direct result of viewing the film. Importantly, all of the women said they will tell others about the film and 100% of the women believed that the video should be shown in all health centers.

Conclusions

The results indicate that the client-centered counseling approach of the

CC Initiative is an effective way to increase client satisfaction with FP services in Jordan. This approach fosters professionalism and positive attitudes among providers and ensures that clients receive a comprehensive, supportive and respectful counseling experience.

Health providers also appreciate the CC materials. According to a physician at an MCH clinic, the "cue cards made the process for choosing modern family planning methods easier." A midwife added: "I can't imagine the counseling sessions without the Wheel!"

The association between client satisfaction and CC materials suggests that they should continue to be disseminated throughout Jordan. Furthermore, given the highly positive perceptions of the "Hayati Ahla" video, it should be made available in as many health centers as is economically feasible. Training all doctors, midwives, and FP counselors in "Hayati Ahla" campaign's CC counseling approach is also important.

Wider dissemination of the CC Initiative across Jordan will hopefully lead to higher client satisfaction with FP services, and reduce the unmet need for FP. Satisfied clients are, after all, much more likely to continue to practice family planning.

Works cited

WHO Fact sheet #351, April 2011. "Family planning"
 Department of Statistics [Jordan] and ICF Macro. 2010. Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2009. Calverton, Maryland, USA: Department of Statistics and ICF Macro.

Photo credit: Jordan Health Communication Partnership Staff

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