EVALUATION OF A PARTICIPATORY ANTENATAL CARE STRENGTHENING INTERVENTION ON HEALTH PROMOTING BEHAVIOURS IN JIMMA, ETHIOPIA, 2009-2011

S. Villadsen¹, D. Negussie², A. GebreMariam², A. Tilahun², T. Girma², H. Friis¹, V. Rasch²

¹. University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark
². Jimma University Specialized Hospital, Jimma, Ethiopia

Introduction: Antenatal care (ANC) provides a unique opportunity to counsel women on healthy behaviour. However, often health education is not provided or the time allocated is not sufficient. The objective of this paper was to assess the effect of a participatory ANC strengthening intervention on health promoting behaviours.

Material and methods: The intervention was designed participatory and consisted of trainings, supervisions, equipment provision, development of health education material, and adaption of guidelines. It was implemented at three health centres and one hospital in the Jimma area. Control sites were included. A questionnaire survey before (2008-2009) and after (2010-2011) intervention included women, who gave birth within 12 months preceding the interview dates. The effect of the intervention was assessed by comparing the change in health promoting behaviours from before to after the intervention period at intervention sites relative to control sites using logistic regression.

Results: There was a positive effect of the intervention on breastfeeding practices (OR 2.0, 95% CI: 1.2; 3.2), and preventive health care for the infant (OR 1.9, 95% CI: 1.3; 2.8). The effect of the intervention on various outcomes was significantly modified by maternal education, and the intervention increased health facility delivery (OR 2.7, 95% CI: 1.0; 7.1) and breastfeeding practices (OR 12.0, 95% CI: 3.6; 39.6) among women with no formal education.

Conclusion: The participatory intervention translated into improved health promoting behaviour. The effect on ANC attendants in health facility delivery and breastfeeding is encouraging and underlines the need to scale up priority of health education.