MALE PARTNER INVOLVEMENT IN MATERNITY CARE IN ABLEKUMA SOUTH DISTRICT, ACCRA, GHANA

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BACKGROUND
In settings where men play key role in decision making in the household, some women’s access to and utilisation of health service is influenced by their partners. Male involvement in maternity care is one key strategy that can be used to accelerate the decline in maternal mortality in Ghana.

OBJECTIVE
The objective of this study, conducted in Ablekuma South District of Ghana was to determine the level of male partner involvement in maternity care and identify factors that influenced their involvement.

METHODS
A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 422 men aged 18 years and above with children 5 years and below. The survey was complemented by 4 focus-group discussions. Male involvement was measured using a composite measure of 5 key points.

RESULTS
The mean age of participants was 32.9 years (SD=8.2). Overall, 26.4%, 55.2% and 18.4% had high, moderate and low level of involvement. Higher level of education and the couple living together (OR= 13.12, 95%CI 6.86, 25.08) positively influenced the level of male involvement. Younger age (18-25 years vs. 26-35 years: OR=0.28, 95%CI: 0.12, 0.66) and the couple living with other family members had a negative influence. Healthcare institution barriers included poor staff attitudes, restricted male access to labour wards and unwelcoming environment. Social stigma associated with men playing what is perceived as feminine roles within the community was another barrier.

CONCLUSION
Improving male-friendliness of health facilities and education of the community to sensitize them against the negative attitudes towards male participation in maternity care can improve male involvement.