

Essential newborn care services in a district of Sri Lanka and the effectiveness of an intervention to improve services

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This study aimed at describing the baseline situation of essential newborn care in a district of Sri Lanka, developing and implementing an intervention, and to evaluate the effectiveness of it using the quasi-experimental design. The results revealed that the availability of resources required for maintenance of cleanliness at delivery needs improvement in all 6 Maternity/Obstetric units. In general terms, the knowledge among health care providers regarding theoretical concepts was satisfactory, compared to that dealing with more practical aspects related to essential newborn care. The knowledge and practices relevant to maintenance of cleanliness at the labour room and postnatal ward were poor. Even though the level of knowledge on thermal protection was high among the health care providers, the practices in preventing hypothermia was not so good. Breastfeeding practices were satisfactory throughout the neonatal period with the exception of knowledge in management of breastfeeding problems. Preparedness for neonatal resuscitation and initial assessment for need of resuscitation in the labour rooms were poor. The knowledge of recognition of illness in the newborn, and assessment of the newborn in the labour room and at postnatal ward was satisfactory. General mothers' knowledge on the care of the newborn was satisfactory except on the care of the umbilical cord. Mothers were satisfied with the outcome of care and accessibility to services, but a majority were dissatisfied with interpersonal aspects, technical competency of care and physical environment at the hospital setting.