

Original research article

An evaluation of a family planning mobile job aid for community health workers in Tanzania

Rebecca Braun^{a,*}, Christine Lasway^a, Smisha Agarwal^a, Kelly L'Engle^b, Erica Layer^c,
Lucy Silas^c, Anna Mwakibete^d, Mustafa Kudrati^d

^aFHI 360, 359 Blackwell Street, Suite 200, Durham, NC 27701, USA

^bUniversity of San Francisco, School of Nursing and Health Professions, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA

^cD-tree International, PO, Box 31269, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

^dPathfinder International, Chato Street, Plot No. 260, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Received 7 July 2015; revised 22 March 2016; accepted 26 March 2016

Abstract

Objectives: The global rapid growth in mobile technology provides unique opportunities to support community health workers (CHWs) in providing family planning (FP) services. FHI 360, Pathfinder International and D-tree International developed an evidence-based mobile job aid to support CHW counseling, screening, service provision and referrals, with mobile forms for client and service data, and text-message reporting and reminders. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the acceptability and potential benefits to service quality from the perspective of CHWs and their clients.

Study design: The mobile job aid was piloted in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Data collection tools included a demographic survey of all 25 CHWs trained to use the mobile job aid, in-depth interviews with 20 of the CHWs after 3 months and a survey of 176 clients who received FP services from a CHW using the mobile job aid after 6 months.

Results: Both CHWs and their clients reported that the mobile job aid was a highly acceptable FP support tool. CHWs perceived benefits to service quality, including timelier and more convenient care; better quality of information; increased method choice; and improved privacy, confidentiality and trust with clients. Most clients discussed multiple FP methods with CHWs; only 1 in 10 clients reported discussion of all 9 methods.

Conclusions: This research suggests that mobile phones can be effective tools to support CHWs with FP counseling, screening and referrals, data collection and reporting, and communication. Challenges remain to support informed contraceptive choice. Future research should focus on implementation, including scale-up and sustainability.

Implications: Mobile job aids can uniquely enhance FP service provision at the community level through adherence to standard protocols, real-time feedback and technical assistance, and provision of confidential care. This study can inform future efforts to support and expand the role of CHWs in increasing FP access and informed contraceptive choice.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Family planning; Community health worker; Mobile phone; Text message; mHealth; Tanzania

1. Introduction

Increasing access to family planning (FP) has powerful health, social and economic benefits, yet an estimated 222 million women report unmet need [1]. By providing education and counseling, contraceptive methods and referrals [2,3], community health workers (CHWs) can

increase contraceptive use, reach underserved populations and provide cost-effective services [4]. Working from within their own communities, CHWs can be particularly effective when traditional, social or religious customs stigmatize FP [5]. However, CHWs are not always trained, equipped and supported to ensure optimal service delivery [6].

CHWs often use job aids to support their fieldwork [7], yet research suggests that they face problems with paper job aids, including protocol compliance and diagnosis and treatment errors [8,9]. In Tanzania, CHWs identified challenges using paper job aids to support FP services,

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 919 967-7052.
E-mail address: braunr@ipas.org (R. Braun).

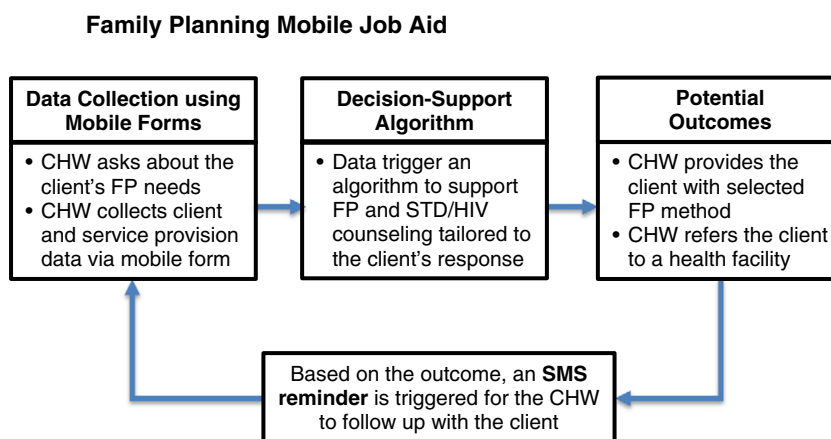


Fig. 1. Family planning mobile job aid.

including portability, usability, outdated information and ease of damage. Data collection, management and reporting were time consuming, with significant potential for data loss, and counseling standards were not adequately supported [10].

The global rapid growth in mobile technology provides unique opportunities to support CHWs to provide FP services [11]. Currently, CHWs use mobile tools to collect health research, program monitoring and client care data [12]. CHWs also provide health services using mobile devices through decision support and alert/reminder tools. Research suggests that these tools can encourage compliance with standards and guidelines [8,13] and increase efficient service delivery [14].

To support CHWs in providing FP services in Tanzania, FHI 360, Pathfinder International and D-tree International developed an evidence-based mobile job aid to support CHW counseling, screening, service provision and referrals, with mobile forms for client and service data, and text-message reporting and reminders (Fig. 1). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding, and the Tanzania National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) supported data collection. The mobile job aid was designed to improve service quality and protocol adherence, and enable real-time data collection and management. This study aimed to evaluate the acceptability and potential benefits to FP service quality from the perspective of CHWs and their clients.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. FP mobile job aid

In June 2011, FHI 360, Pathfinder International and D-tree International began development of the FP mobile job aid in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In July 2012, when D-Tree International had completed the initial programming, 6 CHWs from the Ilala district were identified to test the initial

version for a period of 6 months. During this time, D-Tree International and FHI 360 conducted usability testing, including a focus group discussion and field observations with each of the 6 CHWs. D-Tree International used these findings to refine the job aid to the version used in this pilot study.

The mobile job aid provides three functions: (a) a decision support tool for CHWs to counsel, screen and provide referrals to clients; (b) a data collection tool for CHWs to record routine client and service data; and (c) a text-message-based management tool to support CHWs and their supervisors via reports and reminders. The mobile job aid contains only text, without graphics or videos, and is designed for a simple mobile phone that does not have Internet access. The mobile job aid content is adapted from two global evidence-based tools, the Balanced Counseling Strategy Plus¹ and the Checklists for Contraceptive Methods,² both of which reflect best practices in FP service delivery. During development, NIMR staff provided additional guidance on national FP protocols and policies. The mobile job aid was built using CommCare [15], a flexible, open-source mobile and web platform designed for gathering and distributing health information. The FP mobile job aid is not available publicly at this time. A more detailed description of the mobile job aid development and implementation is available in a separate publication [16].

2.2. Study populations and procedures

The mobile job aid was piloted in January 2013 by 25 CHWs working with Pathfinder International in three public facilities in Ilala district, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. All CHWs affiliated with each of the three facilities were selected for participation in the study. Prior to participating

¹ Available from: <http://www.popcouncil.org/research/the-balanced-counseling-strategy-plus-a-toolkit-for-family-planning-service>.

² Available from: <http://www.fhi360.org/resource/service-delivery-tools-and-job-aids-family-planning-providers>.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6170675>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6170675>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)