

The role of Integrated Supportive Supervision (ISS) in strengthening community Family Planning (FP) service delivery.

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Background/Objectives: Integrated Supportive Supervision (ISS) is an intervention that facilitates quality improvement by ensuring adequate oversight, skills and knowledge transfer to health service providers. The ISS process is a shared responsibility of FP stakeholders and the IntegratE project team to ensure quality service delivery by PPMVs and CPs. The joint supervision is usually carried out quarterly and a checklist is used to guide this process and the stakeholders include PCN, NAPPMED, SMoH and SPHCDA. This study explores the potentials of ISS implemented by the IntegratE project to enhance the quality of FP service delivery among PPMVs and CPs in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods: We employed qualitative research methodology to gain insights on the impact of ISS among consenting FP providers. Three (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with fair representation of male and female participants across all groups (Health Trained, Non-Health trained PPMVs and CPs). Phone interviews were also conducted among seven (7) members of the supervisory team. All FGDs and interviews were transcribed and thematically analyzed.

Results: On the commitment to FP service delivery, regular ISS visits proved useful in ensuring that service providers retained their commitment to “best practice” in FP service delivery thereby maintaining quality FP service provision. Some providers agreed to witnessing an improvement in counselling skill and proper use of job aids in service provision after ISS visits. On proper waste management, ISS visits provided timely information on medical waste segregation and proper waste disposal. Regarding documentation of services, ISS contributed to the improvement in complete and timely documentation of service provision using relevant tools. ISS was also described by government stakeholders as a platform for knowledge transfer and quality improvement as it provided a unique opportunity to close quality gaps discovered during supervisory visits.

Conclusions: Beyond improving quality of FP services, ISS fosters collaboration between the private sector (CPs and PPMVs) and government making the latter play a more supportive role than enforcement which will strengthen the overall health systems.