

Prevention and Treatment of Obstetric Fistula: Community Work Makes a Difference

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Background

Maternal mortality and morbidity remain high in Bangladesh, where skilled providers assist only 18% of births. Obstetric fistula is perhaps the most devastating childbirth injury, yet awareness about the condition and its causes is low.

Objectives

The Fistula Care Project in Bangladesh sought to use health workers to educate communities in order to improve fistula prevention and to increase the use of fistula repair services.

Methods

A campaign was launched to raise awareness about obstetric fistula.



Hospital staffs carried out planning meetings with district and sub-district health managers, followed by community meetings.

The meetings focused on danger signs of pregnancy and childbirth, the importance of timely referral and the problem of fistula and its causes.

Challenges

- First challenge is to coordinate with the government in implementing fistula activities, both of facilities and of fields.
- The next challenge is to make the coordination effective and sustainable.

Benefits

Direct benefit is the fistula patients are coming for their treatment.



Recent fistula cases are less than the old ones due to awareness raising of the community.

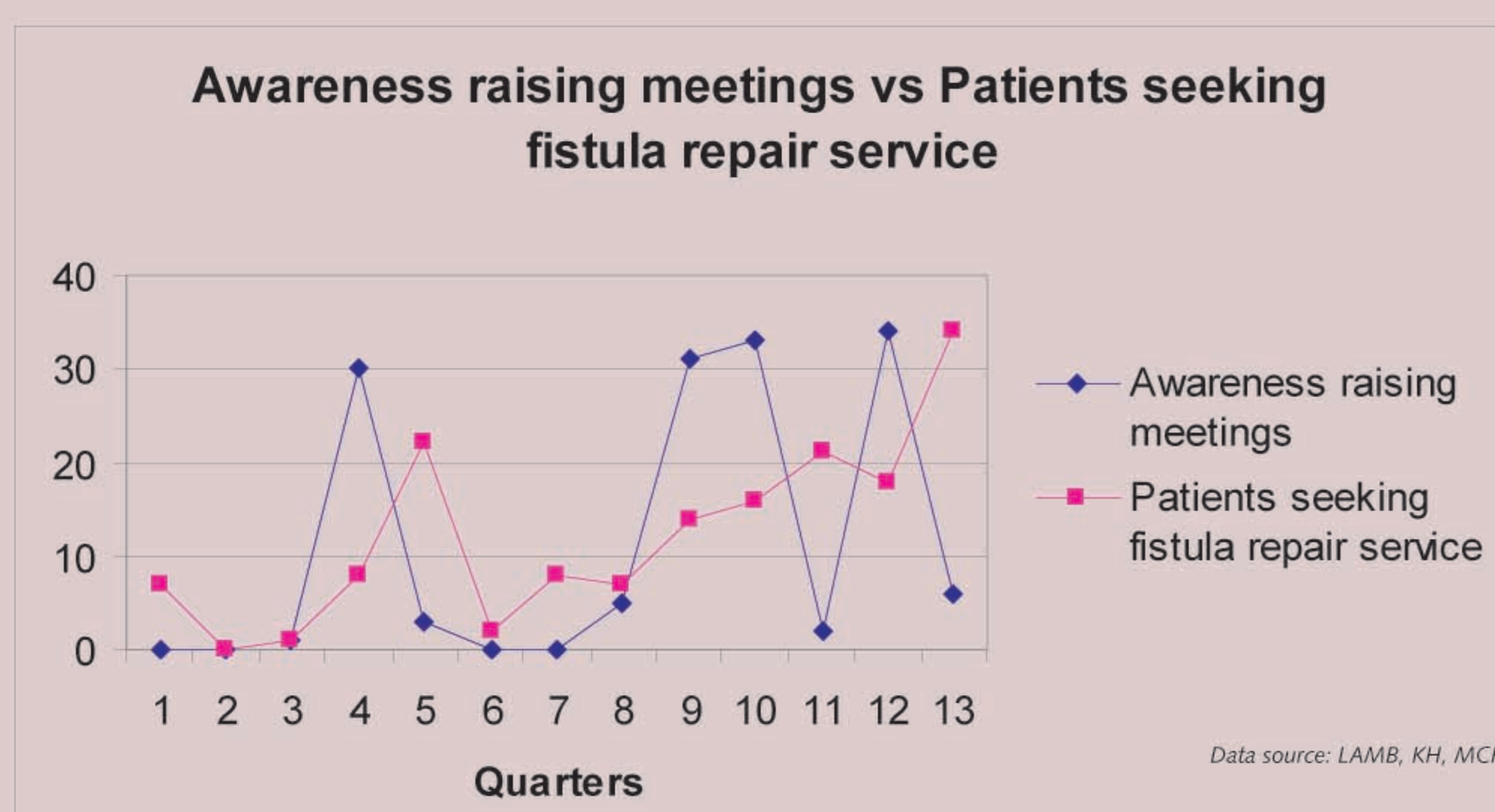
Way forward and Conclusion

- Strengthening emergency obstetric care, safe delivery units and family planning services in the facility and by involving more categories of people.
- More catchment areas can be included under the awareness raising activities surrounding the hospitals.
- Posting of more bill boards having prevention messages.
- An organized communication campaign on obstetric fistula may be conducted to re-inforce these preventions activities.

Findings suggest that awareness-raising campaigns have encouraged women with obstetric fistula to seek care and demand for safe delivery services.

Results

The awareness-raising campaign promptly increased uptake of fistula repair services at the participating hospitals.



Hospitals documented spikes in demand for fistula repair immediately following concentrations of awareness-raising meetings in communities.