

# Antenatal Care-Seeking by Pregnant Women in Misungwi District, Rural Tanzania: A Qualitative Assessment.



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## Introduction

- Antenatal care (ANC) attendance 4 or more times is recommended to improve maternal and newborn survival
- Baseline household survey in Misungwi District, Lake Zone Tanzania showed few ANC visits among most pregnant women. Only 47% of the women attended  $\geq$  4 times throughout the pregnancy period.
- Qualitative study was conducted to understand pregnant women care-seeking in Misungwi district prior to the District-wide maternal newborn and child health (MNCH) intervention
- Objective: The study objective was to explore barriers and enablers to ANC attendance as per guideline of at least four visits in Misungwi District

## Methods

- The study was qualitative in design whereby 12 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to community members, health providers and 7 Key-Informant Interviews (KIIs) to regional and district health committee members as decision makers were conducted
- Purposeful selection of participants were made to represent the mentioned stakeholders below stakeholders:
  - User-groups
  - Community members
  - Health providers
  - District health decision-makers
  - Regional health decision-makers
- Interviews were conducted in Swahili, recorded then transcribed into English. Back to back translation was also made to ensure trustworthiness
- Data entered and coded in Nvivo software
- Content analysis method by Graneheim was followed in analysis of both FGD and KIIs



Fig. 1 Need to emphasize male involvement in all aspects of care

## Results

- Qualitative study was conducted in July-Sept 2016
- Findings indicated the following Barriers (Table 1) and enablers (Table 2) to completion of recommended ANC attendance as below

**TABLE 1: BARRIERS TO ANC ATTENDANCE AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN MISUNGWI**

Barriers	Explanation
Lack of husband/partner	Those without a husband/partner could not attend or were required to wait longer
Long distance to facility/ANC	Women living further were less likely to attend ANC
Male dominant system	Some women were not permitted by their husbands to attend ANC
Low levels of education	Some women were unaware of need and how to access ANC

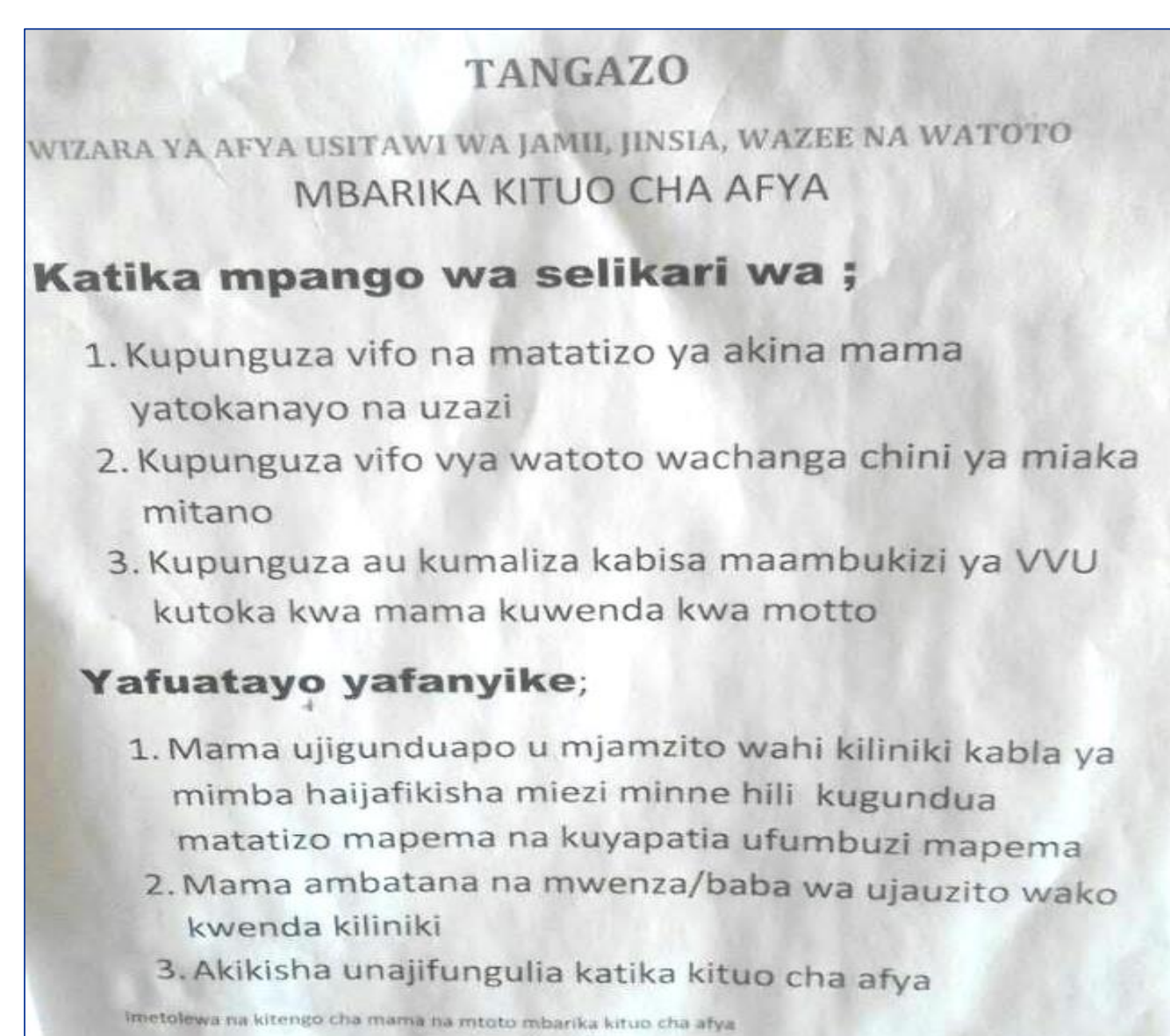


Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 Posters advertising the need for male partners to accompany women to MNCH-related appointments and services, displayed in Misungwi District

**TABLE 2: ENABLERS TO RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY OF ANC VISITS AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN AT MISUNGWI**

Attendance with a partner
Continuous health education
Favorable physical access to the clinic
Improved education and Kiswahili language understanding

## Discussion

- The findings highlighted three key themes which relate to ANC care-seeking among pregnant women at Misungwi, being:
  1. Gender Norms
    - Traditional gender norms among common tribes at Misungwi that women being the ones who carry the pregnancy are expected to attend the clinics
    - Economic dependency of women on men occurred to limit what was seen as unnecessary visits
  2. Education
    - Low levels of education among women contributed to inadequate knowledge and understanding of the importance of 4 ANC visits
  3. Social inequity
    - Long distances to health facility hindered women from accessing care



## Conclusion

- Enhancing ANC attendance requires joint commitment from district community leaders, health facility workers, household decision-makers and communities

## References

- Government of Tanzania(2016). The national road map strategic plan to improve reproductive, maternal, newborn, child & adolescent health in Tanzania(2016-2020): One plan II. Dar es salaam United Republic of Tanzania Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender and Elderly.
- Qualitative survey (2016), Misungwi District, Rural Tanzania
- Mama na Mtoto Project Baseline Report(2016)

## Acknowledgements

"This project is undertaken with financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada (GAC). Research support is provided through an Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa grant, administered through Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC)."



Thanks to Dhvani Paul, Jennifer Hatfield, Sylvia Tinka, Ismat Ali and the Mama na Mtoto project field teams for significant contributions to this project.