

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES OF ACCREDITED SOCIAL HEALTH ACTIVISTS (ASHAS) IN NUTRITIONAL SCREENING AND NUTRITIONAL CARE OF UNDER-FIVE AGE CHILDREN IN URBAN POOR SETTLEMENTS OF DELHI

Shikha Kukreti^{1,2}, Suparna Ghosh Jerath¹ and Monika Rana³

¹Indian Institute of Public Health-Delhi, India

²Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, India

³Delhi State Health Mission, India

Background: India has a high burden of child undernutrition and 45% of childhood deaths can be attributed to malnutrition. The National Health Mission (NHM) envisioned accredited social health activists (ASHA) as health activists in the community who creates awareness on health and its social determinants. Under the Delhi State Health Mission, ASHAs are provided training on child feeding practices and care as per ASHA modules.

Objectives: To assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of ASHAs in nutritional screening and nutrition care of children who are under five years in urban poor settlements of Delhi.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 67 ASHA workers selected from four primary urban health centres of South-east and South district of Delhi. Mixed method approach was used where quantitative data was collected using an interviewer administered questionnaire and qualitative data was collected using an in-depth interview conducted with the medical officer, auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) and focus group discussion with mothers of under-five children.

Results: The overall attitude of ASHA was good regarding nutritional care and nutritional screening. 65% ASHAs had knowledge of nutritional care and screening while 62% ASHAs practiced nutritional care and screening of under-five children and there was a significant association between total practice and knowledge scores of ASHAs ($p < 0.00$). The qualitative finding suggested that although an adequate amount of training regarding infant and young child feeding and nutritional screening was provided to ASHA worker, certain challenges and motivational factors influenced their practices.

Conclusion: Present study shows that though ASHAs had the right attitude, their overall knowledge and practice level had gaps regarding nutritional care and screening of under-five children. This is a crucial component as ASHAs are grassroots level functionaries who are in close proximity to the community and have an important role in protection, promotion and support to the nutrition of the children within the community

shikha.kukreti10@gmail.com