Governance challenges and solutions within a free Maternal and Child Health (FMCH) services programme: Re-visiting the SURE-P MCH programme in Nigeria

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Introduction/background:

Health governance is the totality of ways in which a society organizes and collectively manages its health affairs. The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) included MCH related interventions referred to as SURE-P/MCH. It was launched on January 2012, but was shut down in April 2015 following emergence of a new National government. The programme was aimed at improving access to quality free MCH services. There is need to look at the lessons learnt around governance of such programmes. This will inform the planning and implementation of free MCH services as will be provided by recent health financing programme reforms in Nigeria like the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF)

Objective(s)

To explore the governance challenges and solutions within the free MCH services in the SURE-P MCH programme.

Materials and methods

Document Reviews, IDIs and FGD as part of an ongoing Realist Evaluation of the SURE-P/MCH programme. The Siddiqia et al. 2009 framework for assessing Health Systems Governance was used for analysis

Results

The key challenges included issues around strategic vision; participation and consensus orientation; rule of law; transparency; responsiveness of institutions; equity; effectiveness and efﬁciency; accountability; information and ethics

Conclusion and recommendations

The FMCH within the SURE-P/MCH programme was fraught with lots of challenges. Access to information, social accountability efforts, increased effective health reporting, financial audits, equity, inclusiveness and others are associated with improved governance of the FMCH. The information provided here will assist development and implementation of similar FMCH programmes in Nigeria to ensure good governance