

Abstract

Purpose

Counseling for birth preparedness and complication readiness (BP/CR) is one of the important elements of antenatal care (ANC) to reduce maternal mortality in developing countries. This study aimed to examine if there was improvement in nurses' BP/CR and counseling knowledge and behavior using an educational program of job aid supported counseling for BP/CR during ANC in rural Tanzania.

Methods

This research used a quasi-experimental pre-post study design. This study was conducted at a hospital at Muheza district of Tanga region in Tanzania from the end of June 2015 to early August 2015. The intervention was a three-hour educational program for nurses and the goals were to: (1) develop nurses' knowledge of the importance of BP/CR and danger signs during pregnancy, (2) improve their knowledge about counseling ANC, (3) promote their behavior in terms of counseling skills during ANC, and (4) enhance the quality of counseling during ANC with pregnant women. The study used questionnaires for nurses and pregnant women. The data about nurses were collected at three time points: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up test four weeks after the program. The data for pregnant women were collected in exit surveys immediately after they received ANC counseling at two time periods: before and after the educational program.

Results

The educational program for nurses resulted in an immediate and significant improvement in the knowledge of counseling skills. Four weeks after the program, there was a significant enhancement in the behavior of providing information on danger signs and in the behavior of caring for pregnant women. Because nurses had previously acquired knowledge of BP/CR, the scores for behavior of counseling skills remained stable after the educational program. Regarding the results of the two exit surveys for the pregnant women, the scores of receiving information on danger signs and impression of nurses' behavior increased significantly between the two exit surveys.

Conclusion

The educational program on BP/CR counseling during ANC supported job aid was effective for providing information on danger signs and identifying favorable behaviors with pregnant women.