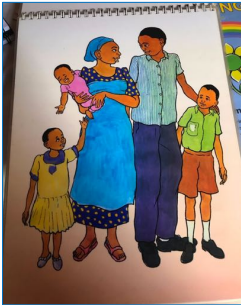


Understanding the Drivers of Paternal Involvement: Interviews with Ugandan Fathers Positively Involved in Maternal and Newborn Health

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Paternal Involvement: increased emotional, physical and time-committed relationships between fathers and their children

Introduction

Maternal and newborn health remains a global health priority. As such, paternal involvement has surfaced as a supportive behaviour. Benefits include supporting self-care of women, improved home practices, increased use of skilled birth workers, increased use of facility care and increased gender equality.(1)

Despite this, little is known on the determinants of paternal involvement and the motivating factors that can lead to this behaviour. Research has mostly focused on the deficits of men rather than study those who exhibit positive behaviours.(2) As a result, this research studied paternal involvement through a novel lens, a non-deficit approach, in Kampala, Uganda. A setting in which Paternal Involvement is low.(3)

Methodology

A cross-sectional qualitative study was designed and utilised semi-structured interviews. Following an interpretivist paradigm,(4) 11 engaged fathers, 4 community/health workers and 2 mothers were recruited from Kampala Uganda. Themes were generated and analysed thematically.

Results

Four key themes emerged:

- ❖ Patriarchal Cultural Norms
- ❖ Role Models
- ❖ Economic Security
- ❖ Father Responsibility

Sub-Themes:

- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Relationship with the mother
- ❖ Previous upbringing
- ❖ The role of government/NGOs

"I explain to you the big thing, we have a fatherhood crisis in Uganda. Father crisis. It's a cycle because people are not fathered. Men are not in a place of accountability and responsibility, responsible masculinity"

I think poverty is one of the reasons why people are not responsible fathers. In this day and age I feel responsibility comes with the financial muscle

"I can open a new slate with my children. A new generation, a new thing my name can be tagged on, a new generation of fathers. To say he was an intentional father"

"If you've been raised to be a good father, it's very very hard to be bad father"

"I know many times the father has chosen money over their family. But you see, you will have all money but a piece of you will be dying that you will never ever be able to revive"

Discussion

The key contributions of this study were:

- ❖ Highlighting the importance of social support, through peer engagement, in promoting Paternal Involvement
- ❖ Identifying the perceived secondary capacity of health workers/government interventions in Paternal Involvement
- ❖ Strengthening the claim that economic security is vital in providing a safe environment for Paternal Involvement
- ❖ Elucidating the discontent of national Paternal Involvement trends in involved Ugandan Fathers

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