

Improving Quality of Care and Perceived Client Satisfaction with Performance-Based Financing in Lesotho.

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The Lesotho Ministry of Health initiated a World Bank funded Maternal and Newborn Health Performance-Based Financing (PBF) project in 2014, later re-structured as Health Sector Performance Enhancement Project. The project is operational in 6 of the 10 districts of Lesotho and aims to improve both the quantity of services in Health Centers (HC) and the quality of care in HC and District Hospitals (DH). The project incentivizes health workers by providing individual monetary incentives and promotes operational autonomy of their Health Facilities (HF) by making direct performance-based payments. The project's impact on quantity of services (measured through 14 indicators) has shown mixed results, although certain indicators have clearly improved; for instance, the percentage of pregnant women delivering in PBF participating HF rose from 53.2% to 74.3% between December 2009 and December 2016. On the other hand, one of the highlights of the project has been an increase in the quality of care provided by the HF. This is measured by quarterly assessments using specifically designed quality checklists, an innovative approach to trace patients and conducting quarterly satisfaction surveys in the communities. The methodology also includes analysis of reports from exchange workshops and field visits to assess the motivation of health workers. Overall, HF are able to improve quality of care by implementing PBF concepts such as: contracting-in with relevant government authorities, improving record keeping and reporting, developing quarterly business plans to strategies on which indicators to improve, involving the community in decision making while rewarding client satisfaction. In addition, the staff motivation methods resulted in improved team work and workers motivation. In the coming two years of project implementation, we aim to develop a clearer understanding as to what extent the increase individual incentives and increased autonomy of the facilities has positively impacted on the quality of care and the perceived client satisfaction.