

EquiNaM

DFID Department for
International
Development

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ECONOMIC
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Who participates? Socio-demographic and socio-economic differences in a women's group intervention to improve maternal and newborn survival

Dr Joanna Morrison, Dr Tanja Houweling & EquiNaM team
<http://equinam.global-health-inequalities.info>



Introduction:

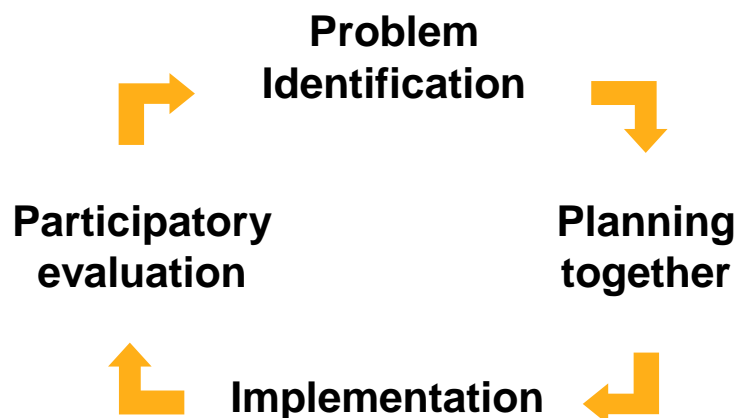
- Progress towards **Millennium Development Goals** has been highly uneven.
- **Lower socio-economic groups** lag behind
- **Inequalities in maternal and child health** are huge - **between** and **within** countries

Our research

Effective interventions are known, but **rarely reach** those who need them most.

7 cluster RCTs of women's group interventions working through participatory learning and action cycles in **India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Malawi**

37% reduction in maternal mortality and **23%** reduction in neonatal mortality (*Prost et al. Lancet 2013*)



Quantitative and qualitative research to understand:

1. What were the socio-demographic and socio-economic differences in attendance in women's groups?

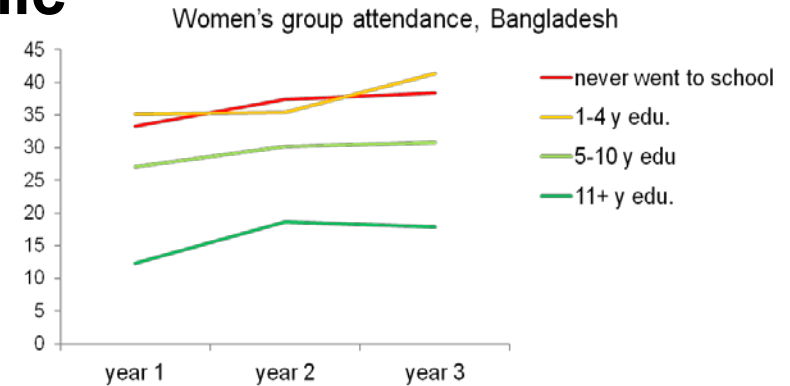
- Secondary analysis of trial data
- Combined population > 2 million
- Prospective surveillance of birth outcomes through post-partum interview

2. Where there were differences, why was this the case, and how can these be changed?

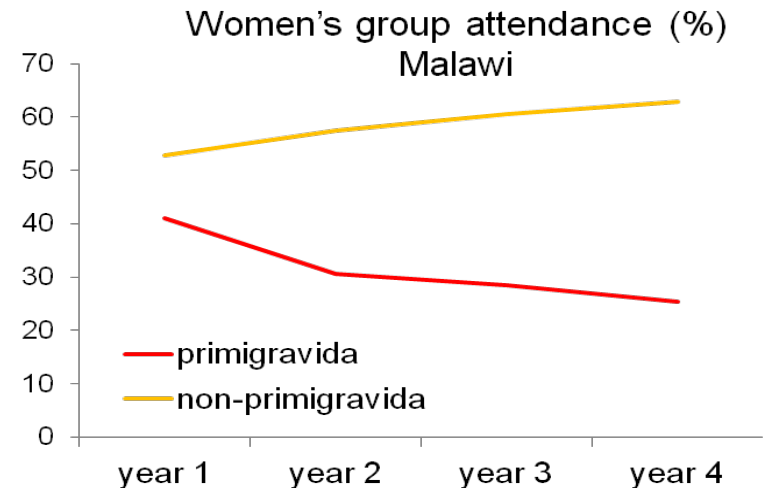
- Purposive sampling of women attending/not attending groups, focus group discussions and SSI

Quantitative findings

- In all trials **small/no socio-economic differences** in women attending groups compared with population
- some sites: lower attendance among **elite** (top 2-10%)



- In all trials **young, married women with no children** attended less
- Not just in **South Asia**, also in **Malawi**



Qualitative findings

Why were there no/small socioeconomic differences between attenders and the population?

- The facilitator was respected and encouraged ALL women.
- The materials were easy to understand and fun
- Maternal and newborn health issues affect everyone, not just rich or poor women, so everyone was interested to learn

Why did young married women with no children attend less?

"As she is just married, she is new in the community. She is under the control of her father and mother-in-law, as well as her husband... also, because of shyness and fear newly married girls don't come to the group." (Nepal Dhanusha FGD)

"I do say I want to go. But they say, 'it's too far away'. And I'm a new bride. People will say bad things about me if I go"(young married woman Bangladesh FGD)

How to overcome barriers to attendance?

Home visits to talk to families and encourage women; split group into two:

"Maybe the women need to be split into two groups; the old women in their own group and those with no children in another group." (Malawi FGD)

Conclusion & Recommendations

Small socio-economic differences in women attending groups
Large socio-demographic differences
Socially and biologically **vulnerable** young married women with their first child had lower attendance
Future interventions need to work with families to encourage these women to attend

