

Building Better Programs through Delivery Science: Experiences, Challenges and the Way Forward

Session Description

Averting deaths due to child undernutrition and improving long term outcomes requires a better understanding of how best to deliver evidence-based interventions at scale to achieve coverage and impact goals. The current systems in many low income countries for health service delivery are inadequate and the utilization of existing services is low. Thus, increasing the scale and coverage of effective nutrition interventions could lead to substantial impacts on nutritional outcomes.

Recent events in the field of nutrition have led to interest in the field of “delivery science” and operational research. A focus on delivery science in nutrition is challenging because the design, delivery and utilization of interventions and services depend not only on the behaviors of policy makers, program planners and implementers, markets and civil society, front-line health providers, but also on the behaviors of households and individuals and the support they receive from their families and communities. In addition, a major challenge is sustaining changes in behaviors of households for long periods of time, rather than on a one-off basis. The need for serious attention to how programs are designed, delivered and used in public health program settings is recognized to be fundamental to ensuring accelerated scaling up of successful interventions.

Objectives

The objectives of the symposium on delivery science are to: a) highlight factors that affect the delivery and utilization of nutrition interventions and programs, b) demonstrate the benefits and program/policy impact of investments in delivery science, and c) discuss the delivery science needs that can best help nutrition programs achieve their public health goals.

Outcomes – knowledge and action points

The presentations of country experiences will demonstrate the impact of investments in applied research on program delivery on program design and implementation in developing countries. A facilitated discussion of the most pressing research needs and a way forward for researchers, program implementers and donors will further the dialogue of how to advance the field of delivery science and how to help increase the returns to investments made in nutrition programs.

Symposium Chair & Co-Chair: Purnima Menon, IFPRI and Mainstreaming Nutrition Initiative, India / David Peters, Johns Hopkins University and Future Health Systems Consortium, USA

Session Topics and Speakers

Topic 1: *Framing Research on Delivery and Utilization in Nutrition Programs – Lessons from Health Systems Research*

Speaker: David Peters/Anbrasi Edwards, Johns Hopkins University, USA

Topic 2: *Linking Research on Program Delivery and Utilization to Large-Scale National Programs: The Experience of Progreso/Oportunidades in Mexico*

Speaker: Juan Rivera, National Institute of Public Health, Mexico (TBC)

Topic 3: *Experiences from Country-Level Testing of a Micronutrient Program Assessment Tool: Lessons for Research and Documentation of Program Delivery*

Speakers: David Pelletier, Cornell University, USA / Robin Houston, Consultant, USA

Topic 4: *FANTA/ USAID'S investment in applied programmatic research: Impacts on programs for improving food security and nutrition globally*

Speaker: Gilles Bergeron, Academy for Educational Development, USA

Topic 5: *What can delivery science contribute to country-level implementation needs? Insights from REACH.*

Speaker: Denise Costa-Coitinho, REACH, Italy (TBC)