

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on Exploring Barriers to Vitamin A Supplementation Uptake and Program Implementation Among Children Aged 6–59 Months in Ethiopia: A Qualitative Approach

Original Article, Int J Public Health

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### EVALUATION

#### **Q 1** Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The manuscript addresses an important topic of barriers to Vitamin A supplementation in Ethiopia. Though the Vitamin A supplementation programmes are in place in many countries, the uptake of the services is low, and they are not taken as seriously as the vaccination programmes. Yet Vitamin A helps enhance children immunity, reduce morbidity and mortality.

The main findings of the study:

The major barriers to the uptake of VAS were lack of awareness about the importance of VAS and its schedule among the mothers; should be promoted among mothers. Additionally, there were inadequate health workers and health facilities that were unable to handle the demand for health services by the mothers.

#### **Q 2** Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

The strength of the study is that it addresses an important issue of barriers to the uptake of VAS in Ethiopia, and there is little information on the issue. It is a qualitative study that gives in-depth information on the issue.

Limitations of the study was that it was exclusively qualitative study, with no quantitative data with which to triangulate the findings. The study design is not stated.

#### **Q 3** Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

The manuscript addresses an important topic of barriers to Vitamin A supplementation in Ethiopia. Though the Vitamin A supplementation programmes are in place in many countries, the uptake of the services is low, and they are not taken as seriously as the vaccination programmes. Yet Vitamin A helps enhance children immunity, and reduce morbidity and mortality.

However the following observations were made:

Title: VAS "uptake" more appropriate than VAS "intake"

Abstract: Presents a summary of the study. But counter check the first sentence "Children in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), including Ethiopia, do not receive the recommended dose of vitamin A supplementation (VAS)" Certainly this does not apply to all children. in sub-Saharan Africa?

Introduction:

Line 23–25: "The prevalence vitamin A deficiency (VAD) among children aged 6 to 59 months was one-third worldwide in 2013, with sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) having one of the highest rates (48%) of VAD (2)". Should cite more recent reference for the prevalence of VAD. This is 10 years old and the current prevalence is likely to have changed.

Line 43: Consider replacing "greatest" infant mortality... with "highest"....

Line 46–47: "Currently, VAS is administered routinely in Ethiopia as part of the Health extension program (HEP) to raise and maintain two dosage VAS above 80%." Not clear what the "two dosage VAS above 80%" refers to and its significance. Should elaborate.

Line 49–50: "The national VAS coverage among children aged 6–59 months was 47.1%. In Amhara region it is 58.4% (16)". When was this?

Line 51–52: "...Amhara region only 29.3% of children received VAS (17)" . ? In Line 49–50 above, VAS coverage is stated to be 58.4% for children?

Lines 53, 54: Suggestions for grammatical corrections.

#### Methods

Study design not stated/described. Specify.

Period of study also not specified. Specify.

Should justify why the study is exclusively qualitative, with no quantitative component. Triangulation of the quantitative with qualitative results would have strengthened the findings and conclusions.

.Lines 77–78: "A total of four focus-group discussions, comprising a total of 38 participants, and 12 in-depth interviews were conducted at the Woreda and Kebele labels." How many participants were in in each FGD? Who were the participants in the FGDs and who were the KI?

Line 82: Specify the local language into which the interview guides were translated.

#### Results

Line 115: The section should be "Results" instead of "Result".

Line 117–119: "A total of 38 mothers participated in four focus group discussions, of whom 13 are were in the age range of 18 to 25 years and 12 are in the age range of 26–35 years. More than half (23) of the mothers were from rural communities (Table 1)". Was the difference in age, education level and rural/urban location among the mothers taken into account in constituting FGDs?

Line 122–125: "Participants in the in-depth interviews, comprised women's development army members, health extension workers, health professionals working in health centers, nutrition focal persons, health center heads, district health office heads, and mothers?" Were none of the also mothers?

It seems the results for FGDs were not presented?

#### Discussion

"Despite the fact that women's development army activities are crucial for community mobilization and aid HEWs in increasing child health care coverage, they are not adequately trained and strengthened (39)". The meaning is not clear.

#### Conclusion

"In order to improve service quality and scope, it is also essential to develop strategies that focus on the work environment , such as departmentalization." Meaning not clear.

**Q 4** Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Should consider replacing the work "intake" with "uptake" in the title for it to be more appropriate.

**Q 5** Are the keywords appropriate?

The key words are appropriate

**Q 6** Is the English language of sufficient quality?

The language is generally of sufficient quality, but there are grammatical mistakes that need to be addressed.

**Q 7** Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

**Q 8** Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

The reference list generally covers the relevant literature. But some of the references should be more up to date.

**QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

**Q 9** Originality



**Q 10** Rigor



**Q 11** Significance to the field



**Q 12** Interest to a general audience



**Q 13** Quality of the writing



**Q 14** Overall scientific quality of the study



**REVISION LEVEL**

**Q 15** Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Minor revisions.