

Household gender roles influence the experiences of mothers and fathers in an Infant and young child feeding intervention in Kaduna state, Nigeria

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BACKGROUND

Alive & Thrive implemented a multicomponent multilevel intervention in Kaduna state, Nigeria to engage fathers to support complementary feeding among their children aged 6-23 months

- Fathers educated in community-based organizations and religious services
- Community health extension workers (CHEWs) conducted home visits
- Fathers received text messages and voice prompts
- Mothers received complementary feeding bowls and spoons

OBJECTIVE

Explore how household gender roles influence mothers' and fathers' experiences with intervention components and messages

METHODS

After 12 months of intervention implementation:

- 8 focus group discussions (FGDs) with mothers and 8 FGDs with fathers of children 6-23 months
- FGDs were conducted in Hausa and English.
- Coded using Atlas.ti software
- Analyzed thematically using data matrices.

FINDINGS	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Intervention messages that reinforced fathers' and mothers' traditional roles as "providers" and "caregivers" were well accepted	"The advice is good. Like how we were enlightened, it makes my husband to put in more effort in buying food for the family... It was said on speaker at the mosque that every husband should take care of his family" Mothers FGD.
Intervention materials and messages that depicted fathers in more hands-on roles were also appreciated.	"I like the way the father is helping the mother to feed the child food [on the poster]." Mothers FGD
Some fathers reported assisting mothers with caregiving roles in addition to their roles as providers	"I have seen that I can take care of my children and the family by taking up some roles and not leaving all to my wife.it has shown that we the men need to support in taking care of the children." Fathers FGD
Fathers who performed more hands-on roles reported stronger relationships with mothers and children	"When chores are too much for her, try to help her with some. You can even tell her to go sleep, you will handle the chores today. You see you have reduced work for her. Even the children will like you more" Fathers FGD.
Fathers trust CHEWs, religious and traditional leaders as sources of information about complementary feeding compared to mothers	"They believe what the health workers are saying compare to what their wife will say. They agree with the health worker more because when you tell them, they think your appetite requires you to eat those things and that is why you are asking them to buy it." Mothers FGD
The presence of some fathers at home during the home visits encouraged mothers to take the messages of the CHEWs seriously	"We really want them [CHEWs] to come around because if they met the women and at that point, they [mothers] were not serious about it, when they see the father give audience and accept them, they [mothers] also will give audience." Fathers FGD



CONCLUSIONS

- Mothers and fathers had positive interactions with intervention components and messages, which reinforced their traditional roles in child feeding and care
- Mothers and fathers were also appreciative of messages that encouraged fathers to play a more hands-on roles