THE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING NUTRITION POLICY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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Trend of stunting

The National Nutrition Survey 2005-2006, has shown that about 44% of the children from ages 6 -59 months in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are physically stunted, 5 % are wasted and 18% are underweight. It also showed that 48 % are anaemic, of which 28% have iron deficiency. The proportion of children with vitamin A deficiency accounted for 25.6% of the study population.

Challenge 1: Human resources

Proportion of health workers to the population at lower level is inadequately distributed at the primary health care level and many times one staff is doing many things at the same time and there is often less focus to concentrate on one specific job to produce better expected results.

- Formula: Limited number of staff + many responsibilities + time = poor outcome
- Eg. MCH OIC is also caretaker of nutrition and Family planning services

Challenge 2: Local managers

Many managers are working in difficult working conditions with changing environment and poor infrastructure, Managers face challenges in the areas of personal, technical performance, environment changes and survival and growth ,Shortell & Kaluncy 2000), many of the managers do not know what exactly they are supposed to do.

- “Many challenges await. There are no panaceas for fixing our healthcare system”. Shalala D1.

Challenge 3: health system - need changes

In PNG, there are many reasons why very good policies that have clear goals and visions are not implemented successfully as expected at all levels especially at the lower level where many of the outcomes are measured. Many blame the poor health system as a result of political influences while others have different opinions about various contributing factors including the WHO six building blocks which may have affected the policy implementation resulting in favourable or bad outcomes.

Conclusion

Strengthen M & E system by the use of latest IT Technology (telemedicine) to asses outcomes and also monitors progress of policy implementation, capturing important indicators and/or interventions measured against the policies indicators, thus user friendly.

References