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The Training Support and Access Model Practice-based Clinical Mentorship Program in Rwanda: Mentors' Perceptions of their Role

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The Training Support and Access Model Practice-based Clinical Mentorship Program in Rwanda: Mentors' Perceptions of their Role

Abstract

Limited opportunities for in-service practice-based learning for health care providers (HCP) in Rwanda decreases HCP uptake of new knowledge and skills, which can impact contemporary timely an effective approaches to the management of pregnancy related complications in health facilities. This, in turn, could contribute to an increase in maternal and child mortality rates (MCMR). To help respond to the gaps in continuing education needs of nurses and midwives in Rwandan health facilities, the Training Support and Access Model (TSAM) project implemented a practice-based clinical mentorship program (CMP) in the

Northern and Southern provinces of Rwanda. The CMP involved mentors from varied health professions working together in teams to support mentees' professional development. The aim of which was to strengthen nurses' and midwives' capacity to provide knowledgeable and skilled maternal and child health care.

A qualitative descriptive study aimed to explore nurses' and midwives' experiences as mentors in the TSAM CMP was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented mentorship model. Fifteen mentors who met the criteria for interview were purposefully sampled from a population of 60 mentors and participated in individual interviews where the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide. Five themes emerged from the analysis: 1) Mentors collaborating in teams; 2) Facilitating the mentorship process; 3) Mentors' perceptions of their role in the TSAM CMP 4) Challenges encountered by mentors in the TSAM CMP, and 5) Mentors' recommendations to support future mentor engagement. This presentation will focus on mentors' perceptions of their role in the TSAM CMP. These perceptions are: 1) mentors' perceived benefits for themselves, 2) mentors' perceptions of benefits for mentees, 3) mentors' ultimate influence on patient care, 4) mentors' indirect influence on patient care. In summary, mentors perceived TSAM CMP as an effective strategy that increased not only mentees competencies in maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) but also stimulated their own excitement for learning and support of others' professional development. Mentors perceived that engagement in the mentoring role positively influenced the quality of care provided to mothers and their babies through the overall mentorship teams' actions. The increased quality of care resulting from the mentorship program was linked to the availability of MNCH expert mentors who provided a more comprehensive care package to mothers and babies within their local

health facilities, reducing the cost of travel to the referral hospital and saving lives for several near miss cases.

Key words: Mentor, mentorship, nurse, midwife, nursing and midwifery education, Rwanda.