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Topic: The first 1000 days, infant feeding, and early childhood development

Title: Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy Implementation among healthcare workers in the Nelson Mandela Bay Health District, Eastern Cape

Presentation Type: Oral

Introduction: Nutrition interventions that have been proven to reduce childhood morbidity and mortality are crucial in achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 3: Target 3.2.1 to end preventable deaths of newborn and children under five years of age by 2030. Optimum infant feeding practices particularly exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and appropriate complementary feeding from six months are some of the nutrition actions to strengthen in reducing child mortality.

Method: A convenience sample of nursing professionals (n=32) rendering maternal and child health services in 19 primary healthcare facilities within the Nelson Mandela Bay Health District, Eastern Cape were interviewed using a closed structured questionnaire based on the Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy statements. Data was analysed by means of descriptive and differential statistics.

Results: A majority of the respondents were 40 years and older with 75% of them working in the respective clinics for 1-5years. Although respondents received high scores on their knowledge of infant feeding in the context of HIV, 56% of them reported that they had never seen the Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy before and 43.8% had never received specific training relating to the Infant and Young Child

Conclusion: Increased capacity of staff to implement the policy by means of orientation and training on the policy statements is needed. A monitoring and evaluation framework should be part of the Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy document to assist in the development and collection of appropriate indicators for proper reporting and compliance monitoring