



Women and Infants' Health (WIN) Project

After a decade of restructuring the health sector, the Russian population – particularly women and infants – still face several serious health issues: high rates of abortion, maternal and infant mortality and morbidity; substantial unmet need for family planning; high incidence of sexually transmitted infections; and domestic violence, among others. Through USAID funding, John Snow, Inc., is working to address these and other problems, including limited client-provider communication and structural inefficiencies in the health services.



A neonatologist at Maternity #1 in Velikiy Novgorod introduces a girl to her newborn brother

The Women and Infants' Health Project (WIN) is a comprehensive reproductive health project that has been working in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation in two regions (Perm oblast and Velikiy Novgorod) since 1999. WIN is designed to improve maternal and newborn health care. Interventions include promoting family-centered maternity care, essential care of the newborn, exclusive breastfeeding, and client-centered family planning services, especially for postpartum and post-abortion clients.

Other WIN activities focus on providing appropriate antenatal care, promoting healthy lifestyles, and protecting against domestic violence.

The project interventions consist of client-oriented clinical and counseling training for health care providers at all levels. The training programs emphasize evidence-based medicine and quality assurance methods as the means to enhance clinical practice and reduce unnecessary medical interventions. They also aim to improve provider skills for counseling women concerning family planning, breastfeeding, and care of themselves and their families. Educational materials for clients and health care providers have been developed and distributed within the pilot sites. Two media campaigns on breastfeeding and family planning were developed and the campaign messages have been reinforced through community-based promotional activities. These activities have helped to create a supportive environment for the implementation of new services among families and providers.

During the four-year period 62 training seminars and work meetings were held and 1097 health care providers were trained, including 174 local trainers. The local trainers, in turn, conducted 163 courses with the participation of 3166 health care providers.

Support of health authorities at national, oblast, city and facility levels, local team building, and positive, multi-disciplinary discussions have been crucial in successfully implementing these changes in the health services.

To monitor changes in provider practices, the project has instituted a facility-based monitoring system, and has also conducted two rounds of facility surveys to measure changes in provider knowledge and practice, as well as client experiences and satisfaction with services.

As a result of the project activities, evidence-based principles were integrated into current medical practices at 20 project facilities of Perm, Berezniki and Velikiy Novgorod cities and were achieved the following results:

- Women's satisfaction with the quality of services offered at antenatal clinics increased from 65% to 90% and at maternity hospitals increased from 63% to 87%.

The project is implemented by John Snow, Inc. (JSI) and partners EngenderHealth, Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, and Quality & Performance Institute, University Research Co./Center for Human Services under the USAID Technical Assistance Service Contract (TASC) mechanism

- Four out of five Maternity Hospitals have been certified as WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospitals.



A delivery room at the Maternity #21 in Perm

- At the present time 48% of women prefer to use the opportunity to have their family members present during delivery compared to only 4% in 2000.
- Rooming-in increased from 38% to 82%.
- In comparison with year 2000, currently the number of breastfeeding mothers during their stay at Maternity Hospitals increased from 26% to 88%.
- 73% of new mothers exclusively breastfed their babies for the first 6 months of their lives in 2003 compared to only 28% in 2000
- Family planning counseling is now integrated into antenatal, postpartum and post-abortion care. As a result, the number of women who are counseled on how to avoid unplanned pregnancy has doubled at all types of project facilities. Before the project started there were almost no women practicing lactational amenorrhea method (LAM). Currently, 1 out of every 4 women interviewed postpartum say they are planning to use LAM.
- Availability of information brochures, leaflets and flyers at facilities rose markedly. Now three-quarters of all clients are given or take IEC materials when at baseline less than one third of clients reported on that.
- Among women in the community:
 - perceptions of the prevailing norms in their community about breastfeeding (think most friends would breastfeed) increased almost 6-fold, from 8% at baseline to 53% at endline
 - number of those who after birth had the baby with her day and night at the maternity ward increased from 20% to 55%
 - proportion of those who reported discussion about postpartum contraception with a medical provider increased more than 15% in Perm, and about half that in the other two cities.
 - abortion clients who said that they received contraception counseling also increased between 8% and 22% in the different cities. Those who reported leaving the hospital with a contraceptive or prescription also rose almost 10% in Perm and V.Novgorod and 20% in Berezniki.
 - a large shift to modern methods of contraception was observed: an increase in those using a modern method of between 5 and 10% in the three cities.
 - Abortion rates declined during the course of the WIN project, continuing a trend already evident. General abortion rate fell 6% in Perm and 7% in Novgorod and Berezniki.
- According to the data from the Perm Oblast Health Administration direct savings from the project activities at six project sites during 2001 were estimated at 4.6 million Rubles and for 2002 - 5.0 million Rubles.

The WIN project final dissemination conference and workshop to discuss results and achievements and to elaborate strategies for further dissemination of the WIN project experience took place in Moscow on May 2003. During this conference 17 regions of the Russian Federation wished to disseminate WIN Project experience in their sites.



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