

AB011. Assessment of permissibility of behavioral change counseling in the Philippine Family Planning Program: basis for learning and development strategy

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Background: Family planning is one of the many aspects that affect maternal, child well-being and family economic welfare. Over the past 18 years, the Philippines has ranked 12th amongst Asian countries with the highest population growth rate, this could be due to the existing gaps in the manner of communication being imparted during family planning counseling especially during a pandemic.

Methods: The study employed a mixed methods design. A case study design was used to analyze the policies, guidelines and procedures of behavior change counseling and learning and development strategy. Meanwhile, a cross-sectional study was designed to determine the extent of behavioral change counseling skills and practices of frontline healthcare providers. It was participated by 9 key persons and 65 frontline health care providers.

Results: Results revealed that there is a high permissibility of behavioral change counseling in the current family planning because of a pending policy approval by the Department of Health Executive Committee which includes individual based behavioral change communication. The gaps identified included a no clear policy on the use of behavioral change counseling in the National Family Planning Program. Meanwhile, supervisory health care

providers such as the Public Health Nurse and City Family Planning Coordinator are the direct supervisors of frontline health care providers and are in charge of providing supportive supervision, appropriate job aids and training. However, the supervisors are not trained in supervision, communication strategies and family planning in general. On the other hand, both professional and barangay frontline health care providers perceived having minimal skills and practices in empathic listening and summarizing skills.

Conclusions: The recommendations include a learning and development strategy of frontliners and inter-agency policies with the aim of contributing to the improvement of the communication skills and involving behavioral change.

Keywords: Family planning; reproductive health; behavioral change; counseling

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Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: Both authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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