

ABSTRACT

Although Sri Lanka is a developing country, certain maternal and child healthcare indicators are comparable to that of the developed countries. This development can be attributed mainly to the commitment of Public Health Midwives in preventive healthcare system. However, recent study has shown that the Public Health Midwives are devoting considerable time on managing health records which may negatively affect on their field activities. In fact still insufficient attention has been given in rapid transfer and easy handling of public health records in maternal and child health and family planning. Use of Information and Communication Technologies is one alternative to manage records in public health sector and there is a current trend to increase Information and Communication Technology facilities and use more Information Technology solutions even in the government sector of Sri Lanka.

The main objective in this study is to improve the health information system of maternal & child health and family planning activities performed by Public Health Midwives using an Information and Communication Technology solution and to assess its short term effectiveness.

First, the ground situation analysis in relation to the activities of public health midwives was conducted. Then, a computer based Health Information System was designed and developed as free and open source software. The system is capable of managing raw data as well as processing data to generate reports which can be used to assess Public Health Midwife's performance by themselves as well as by their supervisors. Additionally, system is capable of assisting them on their day today field activities. Subsequently, system was implemented among a selected group of Public Health Midwives in a rural Medical Officer of Health area in Ratnapura district in Sri Lanka. Mini-laptops with the software were distributed among 16 Public Health Midwives. Necessary training to use the laptops was also provided. The progress of the project was evaluated on regular basis.

This dissertation will present evidences on the feasibility and acceptability of the Health Information System that was conducted on pilot basis. The preliminary response obtained was almost 100%. Moreover, this Health Information System can potentially be customised

to manage other public health related services such as non communicable diseases, care for elderly, community mental health and adolescence health. However further continuation of the project and evaluation should be done with the time as the project aims to study the long term feasibility and benefits.