

TIMOR-LESTE
HEALTH CARE SEEKING BEHAVIOUR STUDY
2009

ATTACHMENT: BOXES

Box 1: Patient experience of provider blame and lack of empathy

Did you get what you expected in your consultation with a health provider earlier?

I went there [village-level health post] to have my child weighed as the nurse spoke about the baby's weight. At the time of weighing if the child's weight does not increase I feel upset/embarrassed... Sometimes others call me to go [to the health post] and I am breastfeeding so I can't prepare breakfast. When they call I have to go, the baby's weight does not increase.

What do you mean by upset/embarrassed?

Upset that the child's weight does not increase, we worry that the child will be sick or something. We're scared, worry because it is far, and we must leave to walk [to the health post] at dawn, the fault is with us as mothers. At dawn the child has not yet done wee or poo, not yet eaten and this causes no weight gain ... The nurse says "this month the baby's weight has decreased, did you feed the child or not?"

In-depth interview with service user, Baucau [See full extract in Appendix 4]

Box 2: Midwife demonstrates care of mother and baby

Earlier, what did you mean when you said they [midwife, district-level CHC] served you well?

Giving birth at home or in a hospital is not the same. At home you feel pain for a long time, no joke, and the TBA spits [betel leaf and areca nut onto the mother's skin] and the baby is born, or not. Those who give birth in a hospital are given injections so that their contractions are not painful, and they are served/looked after [by staff]. During delivery they look after you so that contractions aren't painful, then after the birth, they bathe the baby and put it to sleep somewhere – I don't know where, and they also give hot water to the mother for bathing herself, as well as food and milk. The mother feels content because she and her baby are well looked after by the staff.

Adolescent woman, FGD, Lautem

Box 3: Provider flexibility towards patients who have travelled long distances

...So the clinic [sub-district level CHC] is open until 11am?

It's open until 2pm.

If it is not an emergency but a person has a normal sickness can people still come, or what?

If people still arrive we continue to serve them if they live far from the health facility. We ask them where they live and ask why they arrived late. If they say: 'I live far away' we continue to serve them. For those who live nearby the facility and arrive late we send them to read the opening hours for the clinic 8am-2pm [and tell them] you must attend within these hours unless it is an emergency. Like this we avoid the possibility of complaints [from users] and continue to treat them.

In-depth interview, midwife, Oecusse

Box 4: Caesarian intervention in the context of a difficult birth

“...already close to delivery and no TBA, [someone] must then go quickly by motorbike courier [*ojek*] to the hospital to call an ambulance from there. Sometimes the mother [in labour] cannot say anything, cannot even speak. We assist [her] to the hospital they fetch medicine and say ‘wait a little’ if still no delivery they say call the father [woman’s husband] to sign so that the woman can be operated on [caesarean]. If they call the father and he does not sign then the woman could die, if the father signs then they can do the operation and save the baby but the woman also suffers [from the operation]”.

Adolescent male, FGD, Bobonaro

Box 5: Preference for consultation with doctor

Why did you choose to come to this health facility [Bairo Pite clinic] rather than another?

Because this clinic is closer and the doctor gives a consultation which gets a good result.

Can you explain what you mean by ‘good result’?

Before he got sickness of the lungs, he didn’t want to eat, his weight decreased but now he has changed like his body weight is a little improved once more.

User suffering from lung problems, Dili

Box 6: Comment about standard doses for biomedicine

“We [*xefe suco*] socialise the people that even those people who are very intelligent [should realise] that the hospital is more important because sometimes with your traditional medicine you don’t know what is the dose [*doze*] or how much to drink but when you go to the hospital they measure [*sukat*] the medicine - not that we don’t give credit to our traditional medicine but some [people] must be taken to the hospital”.

Box 7: Setting aside medicine for future use

“They get [medicine] from health staff at the time of consultation, they keep/store the medicine [*rai hela*] then when someone falls ill they just give it, e.g. diarrhoea, headache, and they think that the *kader*/PSF will help first, it is not that the health staff give permission to keep/store the medicine but they do it privately and for their neighbours”.

Xefe suco

Box 8: Storing medicine as a response to distance from health facility

Why did you choose to come to this health facility?

"I asked for medicine from them. If we did not come [to SISCa], we must take sick children [to the distant health post]. When the [SISCa] nurses arrive here, it is better to ask for medicine in order to be prepared for someone falling ill, then we can give medicine immediately because the health post is so far away".

Service user, Baucau

Box 9: Reported use of TBA to correct position of baby

What are three important tasks that the community expects from you [in your role as a TBA]?

They are aware that I'm knowledgeable, so when they need something they always come here and ask me to help. The daughter-in-law of that elderly aunt [indicates woman sitting nearby] recently attended [antenatal] and was examined by the midwife and the baby's position was found to be wrong, lying on its side. After the check-up the midwife asked her to find someone to push [*dudu*]. The old man and his wife then came and said to me: 'My child is lying wrong'. I asked her to lie down and I pushed her stomach, pushed from the left in a downward movement from the lower abdomen up to her chest ... I pushed for 2 days and when she return to the midwife, [she] said that the baby's position is fixed. If they go and the midwife asks: 'Who was the one who pushed?' Just say Macu is the person that pushed. Macu [informant] began in Indonesian times and every midwife recognises me and they say it is true that Macu knows how to push.

In-depth interview, TBA, Oecusse

Box 10: Interventions to deal with difficult childbirth

A woman went to a (district-level) hospital due to the baby's leg delivered first, but despite the midwife's strenuous efforts (*kosar*) was unable to deliver the baby, and the family then arranged for someone to provide traditional medicine to the woman still at the hospital, and then the baby was delivered safely.

Married man, FGD, Covalima

A TBA tried to assist a woman whose waters broke early without resulting in delivery, but was unable to assist the delivery and the family of the woman took her to hospital where staff proposed that a caesarean be performed. The woman's husband then returned home and consulted a *matan dook* to determine the cause which was thought to be related to something done by the husband's grandfather. The problem was then addressed ritually, and the husband returned to the hospital and informed the nursing staff that there was no need to carry out caesarean because the child would be shortly be born, and it was born naturally not long after.

Adolescent male, FGD, Bobonaro

Box 11: Effect of not spacing on woman's health

What happens for a husband and wife to begin thinking about birth spacing?

First, they think of economy, and second, the mother's condition. Sometimes the mother's condition is not good – delivering a baby every year. If we compare the yield of corn planted in the same field year after year. In the first year it yields well, in the next year the yield is less because the fertility of the soil had decreased. It is like this with people also: if a woman gives birth every year, her condition declines. So a mother should think first and for the sake of her health wait at least two years then have another baby

Adolescent male, FGD, Ainaro

Box 12: Comment about community awareness of preventive behaviour

A nurse working in an NGO clinic in Dili explained:

“In this country, awareness about disease prevention is minimal. You seek out a health facility when you are sick only. Even then sometimes people arrive with a condition that has gone on for five or six days. [We have] less than target for immunisation, and for antenatal care. You can see from people's behaviour – it is indicated from hygiene, sanitation, smoking [tobacco], and now in parts of Dili, sexual relations have increased [STDs]. This shows that there is no awareness about avoiding disease.”

Box 13: Community trust of official resources dealing with prevention

“Flipcharts, pamphlets, posters from the Ministry of Health show [messages] to them so that they understand, otherwise they say that ‘health staff come and tell lies to us and at night they [health staff] don't even sleep with a mosquito net’. Because of this we must show posters to them and we give promotion about topics that we have prepared to convey to them, and we give daily topics that we are going to talk about”

Midwife, sub-district level facility

Box 14: Provider accommodation of custom as underlying cause of illness

Why are some people still thinking like this [perceiving custom as cause]?

For example, people first look to custom as causing the illness - they think that they neglected their ancestors, only after that do they seek treatment, otherwise it would have no effect. Some come here [health facility] and at the same time go elsewhere to settle the unresolved custom matter. I have explained to some of them: as human beings we have come from God and from the ancestors, but when we fall ill we should go to a health facility because illness is caused by a virus. We should not think first of custom but should go immediately to a health facility, and then at the same time resolve any unsettled matter of custom. And don't forget to pray to God.

Nurse, sub-district level health post, Baucau District