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Expanded program of immunization coverage and associated factors among children age 12-23 months in Arba Minch town and Zuria district, Southern Ethiopia, 2013

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Background: Immunization averts an estimated 2 to 3 million deaths every year globally. In Ethiopia only quarter of children are fully immunized; the rest are remained at risk for vaccine-preventable mortality. To increase the immunization, its coverage and predictors has to be identified. This study has measured immunization coverage and identified the predictors.

Methodology: Cross-sectional community based study has been conducted within 630, age 12-23 months children in 15 districts of Arba Minch town and Arba Minch Zuria district, Southern Ethiopia in March 2013. Census was done to identify eligible children. The 2005 world Health Organization expanded program of immunization cluster sampling method has been used. Data were collected using semi-structured pretested Amharic version questionnaire by interviewing index children's mothers/caretakers, copying from vaccine card and observing BCG vaccine scar. Data were processed using SPSS version 16. Associations between dependent and independent variables has been assessed and presented using three consecutive logistic regression models.

Result: Nearly three fourth (73.2%) of children in Arba Minch Town and Arba Minch Zuria district were fully immunized. The rest 20.3% were partially immunized and 6.5% received no vaccine. Mother education, mothers' perception to accessibility of vaccines, mothers' knowledge to vaccine schedule of their site, place of delivery and living altitude were independent predictors of children immunization status.

Conclusion: Expanded program of immunization (EPI) coverage at Arba Minch town and Arba Minch Zuria district is better than the national immunization coverage but still below the goal. Educating mother, promoting institution delivery could help to maintain and enhance current immunization coverage. More emphasis should be given to the highland areas of the area.

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