

8th World Congress on

MIDWIFERY AND WOMENS HEALTH

March 18-19, 2019 Sydney, Australia

The sustainability of the elimination of the mother-to-child HIV transmission program in the Eastern Cape: Team's perception on quality improvement**Doreen K M M'Rithaa and Dorothy Williams**
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Background: The sustainability of the elimination of the Mother-To-Child HIV Transmission (eMTCT) program has decreased worldwide. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and other collaborators engaged in the eMTCT program are faced with challenges in the implementation of programs or interventions that can cause a threat to program sustainability. The eMTCT interventions are beneficial to patients and their families and contribute towards improvement and sustainable health outcomes. Sustainability of these interventions following departure of the partners remains a concern.

Aim: The purpose of this study was to explore the quality improvement team's perception of the sustainability of eMTCT Quality Improvement Collaborative (QIC) program implemented in the Mnquma sub-district in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa using a quality improvement collaborative approach.

Methods: A qualitative research methodology with a descriptive exploratory design was utilized. A purposive sampling method was utilized to select 14 health clinics where the eMTCT QIC program was implemented. Two focus group discussions were conducted, four and nine participants respectively and three individual interviews. A semi-structured interview guide was used for the interviews. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Colaizzi's method was applied for the data analysis.

Results: The four themes that emerged from the data are: Appreciating the QIC design; program empowerment; community influences and development challenges to program sustainability.

Conclusion: Planning for sustainability is very important from the beginning of any new intervention. Organizations must clarify what is going to be sustained. Leadership buy-in, teamwork, communication and feedback, regular data management, staff support, motivation and acknowledgement may lead to continuous improvement.

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