Background

- Oral rehydration salt (ORS) plays a crucial role in the management of childhood diarrhea reducing death and disability from diarrheal disease.
- Key messages on appropriate health and care-seeking behaviors, including use of ORS were provided through health facility workers, household education by community based health volunteers (CBHVs), and mass media in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

Objectives

- Assess households’ experiences in managing common childhood illnesses, including diarrhea.
- Inform the design of a pilot study aimed at substantially improving access and quality of health services for children under-five at the existing point of service including private medicine vendors (PMVs).

Methods

- Cross-sectional household survey in 2013
- Conducted in four Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Bauchi State, Northeast region of Nigeria.
- Two-stage cluster sampling of 1,588 households with children less than 5 years of age
  - 1st stage, a random sample of 30 villages/clusters per LGA.
  - 2nd stage, 50 target households sampled per cluster.
  - Each household screened firstly for under-five children, and secondly for a sick under-five child in the last two weeks.
  - Mother or caregiver interviewed using household and under-five questionnaires.
- Ethics Review and approval by Bauchi State Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
- Informed consent obtained from eligible respondents.
- 3,077 children under 5 years of age were identified in 1,588 selected households.
- 1,560 mothers with sick children under five in the last two weeks before the survey were interviewed.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (n=1,588)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Never attended school</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary level</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary level</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher level</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>Currently married</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ever married</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15-24 years</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-49 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of drinking water</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-improved source</td>
<td>1,153</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet Facility</td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-improved</td>
<td>1,346</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Descriptive Information about caregivers & Households

- Average age of mother or caregiver is 27 years.
- 22.4% of the children had diarrhea, with 81% (281) of these children (n=349) treated.
- Among mothers of children treated with other drugs, about 60% are aware of ORS while 40% have not heard about ORS or don't know. Knowledge of zinc is very low, 5.8%.

Figure 1: Prevalence of Childhood Illnesses

- Diarrhea: 22.4%
- Cough: 36.3%
- Fever: 76.0%

Figure 2: Type of Providers Visited for Diarrhea Treatment

- Community volunteer: 11%
- Traditional Practitioner: 7%
- Shop: 7%
- Private facility: 2%
- Government facility: 33%
- Private Medical Vendors: 39%
- TSHIP Project: 1%

Figure 3: Type of Drugs Used for Diarrhea Treatment

- Only 1 case was treated using Zinc and ORS.
- 25% of children treated were treated using ORS.

Implications for intervention

- The awareness of ORS is high, however there is need for in-depth examination of possible issues preventing use.
- Further messages that are consistent with local beliefs about the management of diarrhea, need to be provided to caregivers on use and appropriateness of ORS and Zinc.
- Consideration needs to be given to continuous education of existing point of service especially private medical vendors on ORS and Zinc.
- Caregiver awareness of Zinc for the treatment of childhood diarrhea is low, so zinc promotion campaigns need to be developed.

This survey was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Targeted States High Impact Project. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.