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Effect of On-Site Health Services on Employee Attitudes in a Bangladesh Factory

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Extending Service Delivery
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www.esdproj.org

The Extending Service Delivery Project (ESD)

- Global project in reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP) funded by USAID
- Addresses unmet need for RH/FP and focuses on increasing access to services at the community level.
- Managed by Pathfinder International in partnership with Meridian Group International, Inc., Management Sciences for Health and IntraHealth International

Why Focus on Workplace RH/FP Programs?



- Factory workers are
 - Hard-to-reach group
 - Often youth women with unmet RH/FP demand
 - Poor
 - Overworked with limited free time

Why do a study on “Return on Investment”?

- Businesses need a “Business Case”
 - Health programs seen as costly
 - Company focus is on business and profit
- Literature review reveals deficit ROI studies in the developing world context
- ROI means that for every dollar spent, a company earns as much or more back in savings, productivity etc.

What was our hypothesis?

The Business Case Question:

If you spend money on provide an onsite health clinic, will you get a “return” from savings due to reduced absenteeism and turnover and improved employee attitudes?



How did ESD find a willing factory?

- ESD engaged HSPDA, a local health consulting firm, in Bangladesh
- HSPDA found a factory owner willing to invest in health services and:
 - Provide a clinic space onsite
 - Cover the monthly cost of health services and products
 - Allow employee and management time for undertaking a baseline assessment of worker needs and for organizing peer educators during work hours
 - Cooperate with an ROI study
- In January 2005 health services were launched
 - A doctor, nurse and nurse assistant in clinic
 - A 7-cent co-pay per visit by employees
 - Open 1 day a week for 3 hours

Background on Factory

- Based in Chittagong and produces clothing for export for international brands
- About 450 employees; 86 % women
- Workers are young (mean=22 years) and single (67%)
- Housed in a factory complex with two other factories without health services



How was the Study Designed?

- Audit/Analysis of factory employee attendance records between January 2004 and June 2006 to measure changes in staff absenteeism and turnover
- Cross-sectional survey conducted at the factory site with a randomized representative sample of 203 workers (186 women; 17 men)
 - 15 of the 33 factory managers answered the survey
- Four focus group discussions -- eight employees each:
 - married and unmarried women
 - who had used and not used the on-site clinic

What were the overall findings?

- Workers said the availability of on-site health services made them:
 - Less likely to be absent from work
 - More likely to stay in their current job
 - Have more positive attitudes toward factory management
- Analysis of records showed reduced absenteeism and turnover
- Better attitudes toward factory management

Survey Findings

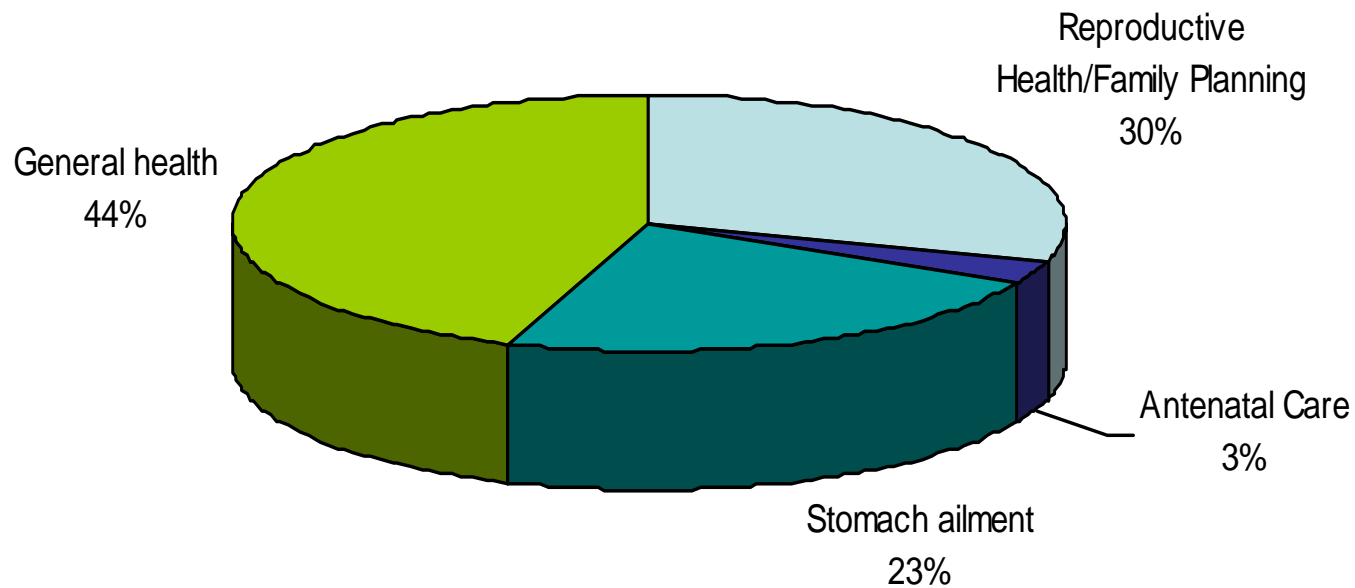
- Survey respondents divided into two groups:
 - Those who used clinic (126 or 62 %)
 - Non-users (72) but were aware of clinic
 - 5 workers did not know about onsite clinic
- Both groups
 - Knew the services offered by clinic
 - Felt quality was good and met their needs
 - Said availability of onsite service factor in employment decisions (absenteeism and turnover)

Awareness of Clinic Services

<i>Do you know what types of services are offered at the factory health clinic?</i>	<i>(n=198)</i>
Referral to other health care centers	99%
General health treatments (asthma, diarrhea, etc.)	93%
Stomach ailment related treatments	91%
Family planning methods	90%
Family planning counseling	81%
Pregnancy/antenatal care	71%
HIV/AIDS counseling	66%
Other health treatments related to reproductive health	56%
STI treatment and counseling	41%

Use of Clinic Services

Proportion of Clinic Services Rendered by Type



Quality of Services

<i>How does the quality of services at the on-site clinic compare to services at clinics outside the factory?</i>	<i>(n=126)</i>
Better	71 %
Same	20 %
Worse	4 %
Unsure	5 %

Perceived Effects on Absenteeism

<i>Do you think that a factory worker misses more work when there is no health clinic at the workplace?</i>	<i>(n=203)</i>
Yes	91%
No	2%
Unsure	7%

Perceived Effects on Absenteeism

<i>Thinking back, do you think that access to the health services at the factory helped you miss less work?</i>	<i>(n=126)</i>
Yes	91%
No	2%
Unsure	7%

Perceptions on Effects on Turnover

<i>Do you think that you are more likely to stay in your job because of availability of on-site health services?</i>	<i>(n=126)</i>
Yes	87%
No	4%
Unsure	9%

<i>Do you think that the availability of the on-site clinic makes you more likely to stay in your job?</i>	<i>(n=72)</i>
Yes	96%
No	0%
Unsure	4%

Worker Attitudes Toward Management

<i>How does the presence of the clinic make you feel about management's concern for workers?</i>	<i>(n=126)</i>
Better	86%
No different	14%

<i>How does the presence of the clinic make you feel about management's concern for workers?</i>	<i>(n=72)</i>
Better	96%
No different	4%

Comments from Focus Group Discussions

- *“Here, we get services instantly; therefore, there is no need to go on leave.”*
(Married, clinic user)
- *“Here we have health services within our reach, so we remain healthier.”*
(Unmarried clinic user)
- *“There are female doctors and female counselors in the clinic. So we can talk about gynecological problems with them easily, but at the government hospital we are not sure at all that we will find this type of situation.”* (Married, clinic user)
- *“I feel very shy about telling my gynecological problems to the outside doctors, but here I feel less shy talking about them because they are like my family members.”* (Unmarried, clinic user)

Comments from Focus Group Discussions

- *“The government hospital is always dirty.”* (Married, non-clinic user)
- *“In the case of the factory clinic, time is not wasted.”* (Unmarried clinic user)
- *“One day I saw the factory owner go to the clinic for treatment. That motivated me a lot.”* (Unmarried, clinic user)

Study Conclusions

- There is a “Business Case” for investing in health:
 - 3:1 return on investment over 18 months
 - 11 percent fewer days lost to absenteeism in the first year; an 18 percent decline over 18 months
 - 43 percent decrease in staff turnover in the first year; a 46 percent decrease over 18 months
- Analysis/Audit of records, quantitative and qualitative data all indicate that health services reduce absenteeism and turnover

What We Learned

- Workers clearly put a high value on the onsite clinic – essentially a minimal intervention
- Management support for the clinic played an important role
- Worker initial input into the form of health services was critical
- General health services that focus on RH/FP is a good way to expand access to RH/FP services

What Next?



- ESD is disseminating study through partnerships with global business organizations involved in health and corporate social responsibility
- ESD will work with organizations to replicate study in other contexts and sectors
 - Focus is on business networks rather than individual factories
- To get report, go to:
www.esdproj.org