

Background

Immunization contributes significantly to the achievement of millennium development goal number 4 and is one of the eight elements of primary health care. Effective utilization of immunization services is associated with improved child health outcomes. WHO targets immunization coverage of 90% for urban areas and 80% for rural areas. Agwata sub-county, Dokolo District fall short of this target precipitating high mortality rates from immunizable diseases.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to identify factors that influence the uptake of immunization among children aged 0-23 months in Agwata sub-county Dokolo District with a view to recommend strategies to improve on immunization coverage in this district based on evidence from the study.

Methods

The study was based on descriptive cross-sectional study involving the use of quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection in Agwata sub-county, Dokolo District. Purposive sampling was used to select Agwata sub-county from the 6 sub-counties of Dokolo District.

Simple random sampling was used to select parishes in Agwata sub-county followed by the villages in that parishes and using lottery simple random sampling households with children aged 0-23 months in those villages were selected.

Results

The study covered 350 households of children aged 0-23 months in Agwata sub-county Dokolo District. There were 124 boys and 226 girls. 62.3% of children were fully immunized, 30.0% partially immunized and 7.7% not immunized. Factors that had significant association with uptake of immunization services among children aged 0-23 months in Agwata sub-county were mothers/caretakers level of education ($p=0.000$), place of delivery ($p=0.010$), age of mother/caretakers ($p=0.021$), religion ($p=0.000$), mother awareness ($p=0.026$), waiting time ($p=0.039$), availability of vaccines at health facility ($p=0.018$), birth order ($p=0.037$) and sex of the child ($p=0.001$). Respondents' health worker attitude ($p=0.960$), distance to health facility ($p=0.254$), perception of immunization ($p=0.852$), family support ($p=0.169$), previous experience with immunization ($p=0.743$), media access ($p=0.059$), marital status ($p=0.383$) and fear of side effect of vaccines ($p=0.458$) were not significantly associated with uptake of immunization among children aged 0-23 months in Agwata sub-county Dokolo District.

Conclusion

The proportion of fully immunized children aged 0-23months in Agwata sub-county, Dokolo District was 62.3% far below the WHO's target of 80%. Uptake of immunization kept on declining from BCG (92.3%) to Measles (80.9%) with high dropout rate of 12.4% an indication of poor utilization of routine immunization services. Therefore, it is recommended that educational and flexible frequent outreach programs on immunization services should be carried out among the residents of Agwata sub-county, Dokolo District to improve utilization of immunization services.