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Background

A [trial of universal home visits](#) in Bauchi State shared information about risks for maternal and child health with pregnant women *and their spouses*. The visits [improved maternal health outcomes](#). We analysed narratives from visited women and men to explore the impact of the visits on gender norms and dynamics.

Methods

- Drawing on [Most Significant Change technique](#)
- Stories of change from 23 visited women & 21 visited men
- Inductive thematic analysis with gender lens



Findings

The [stories reflected changes](#) in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in women and men.

Heavy work during pregnancy

Men acted to protect their wives.

Before I used to force my wife to ... engage in heavy exercise during her pregnancy...I now understand that it is bad and creates serious complications...This knowledge led me to stop her from engaging in any form of heavy work (M 30y)



Use of health services

Men remained decision-makers about use of services:

Previously, I would stop my wives from attending antenatal care services. Now, I have started encouraging my wives to visit antenatal care (M 39y)

Although some women described autonomy:

I decided to take my baby for immunization. My baby is now 7 months and has received 5 immunizations (F 28y)

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Findings

Spousal communication

Women and men described increased communication:

All my life, I never gave any time to my wife ... I was forced ... to change my attitude. I started listening to my wife. I would hear from her on many matters (M 58y)

Previously, I was too shy to sit with my husband and discuss my pregnancy with him. I can now sit down freely and discuss with him about our family issues (F 30y)

Gender violence

Some men described changes in attitudes and behaviour:

I believed that domestic violence was normal between a husband and his wife. When the home worker started visiting me, I understood that domestic violence is not good for a pregnant woman. I learned how to live with my family without domestic violence (M 60y)



Conclusions

The stories suggest the visits:

- Increased male involvement
- Led men to act to improve maternal & child health
- Did not increase women's autonomy or their role in decision making