

Enhancing motivation of family planning service providers as a lever to avoid stock-outs and increase quality of service

The *National Plan for Health Human Resources Development* (NPHHRD, 2008-2015) of the Mozambican Ministry of Health stipulates ‘improving staff distribution, motivation, and retention’ as one of the priority strategic areas. Among the strategies identified are:

- “Develop a salary, subsidy, and incentive strategy specific to health workers within the public administration; [...]
- Understand the capacity for intervening to improve health worker motivation.”

In line with this, we explored how and to what extent motivation can be optimized, and the impact this can have on avoiding stock-outs and improving service quality.

Several activities were implemented during 10 months at 15 health facilities in Maputo Province (Manhiça and Marracuene districts), with the aim of monitoring and improving health workers’ motivation and supply management of 6 family planning methods (Microlut pill, Microgynon pill, implant, IUD, Depo-Provera and female condom):

1. Monthly audits - In all 15 health facilities, data from supply registers (stock cards) were collected and stock-counts were carried out for the 6 contraceptives.
The information was also used to assign credits: health centres earned credits by having a stock card for all 6 contraceptives, by having no errors in the calculations made on the card, and by not reporting a stock-out during the month.
2. Monthly evaluation reports - Feedback on earned credits was provided to 10 of the 15 health facilities. This helped them to identify their weaknesses or encouraged them to continue good practices regarding monitoring contraceptives.
3. Material incentives – Five out of the 10 health centres that received a monthly evaluation report were able to use the obtained credits to acquire small items for the health facility such as furniture or medical equipment.

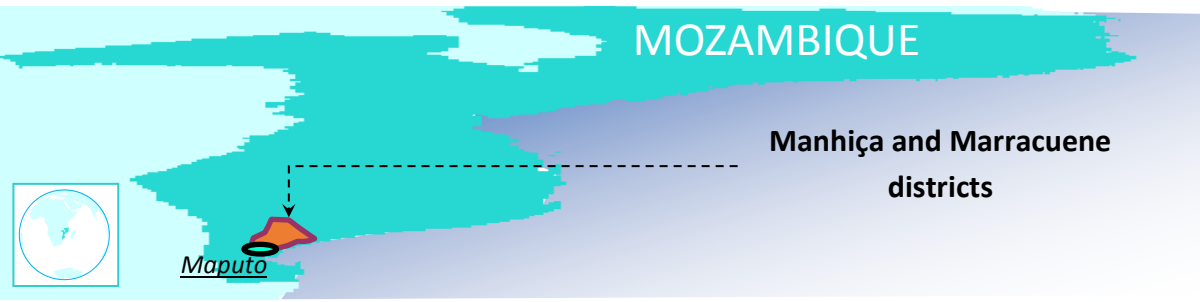
Results were assessed using the monthly audit data, and surveys and qualitative interviews with health workers.

1. Supply management improved in all health care facilities, mainly as a result of the monthly audits which were perceived as motivating and supportive.
2. Health facilities receiving a monthly evaluation report tended to improve more rapidly, indicating the importance of feedback, acknowledgment and recognition of their accomplishments.
3. Finally, health care workers who obtained material incentives reported that they were extra motivated to acquire these extra benefits, although the data did not show a significant difference in this group in comparison to the others.

Stock-outs did not disappear during the intervention period, although the 10 health centres that received monthly evaluation reports had less frequent stock-outs. In general, stock-outs occurred more for those family planning methods that are less used or have lower demand: there were very few stock-outs of contraceptive pills and Depo-Provera (the two most popular methods), while implants, IUDs and especially female condoms were often not available in the health centres.

Our project showed that **supportive supervision is key in improving health care providers’ motivation and supply management skills**. Continuous coaching, pointing out strengths and identifying problems with potential solutions, may have a major impact on health workers’ motivation to reduce stock-outs and increase the quality of family planning services more generally. Extra attention should go to preventing stock-outs of family planning methods that are less used, given that these include the highly effective longer-acting methods, and that these stock-outs could be contributing to the lower demand.

The approach we used

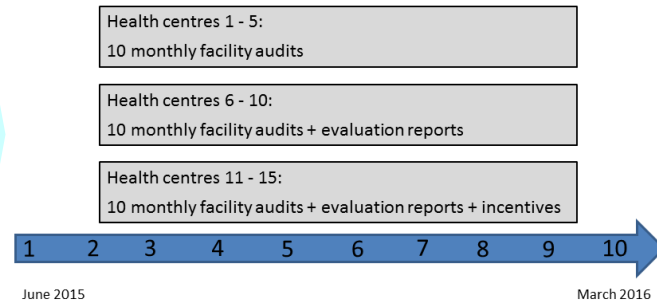


- 15 health centres in Manhiça and Marracuene districts, Mozambique were allocated into 3 groups.

- Activities to increase motivation and encourage stock monitoring were rolled out.

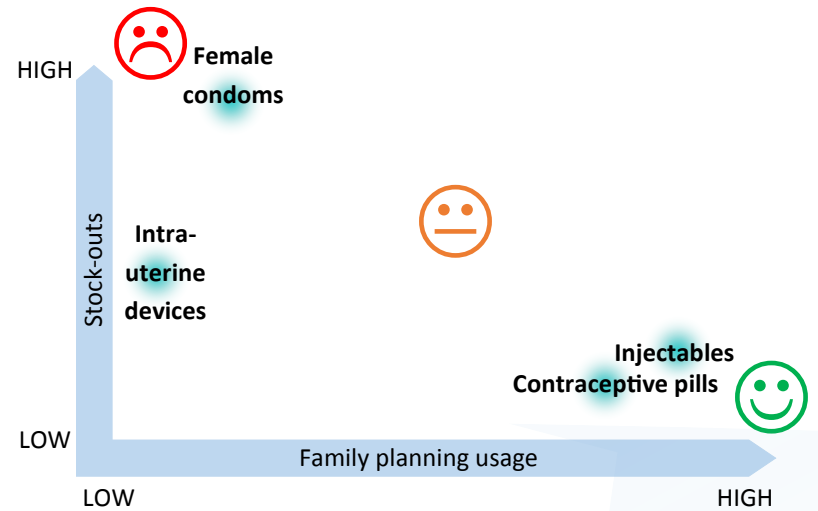
- Data was collected to assess contraceptive supply management on a monthly basis.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT



more information: ICRH. Enhancing motivation of family planning service providers as a lever to avoid stock-outs and increase quality of service. (2016) available at www.icrhb.org.

We studied usage and availability of methods

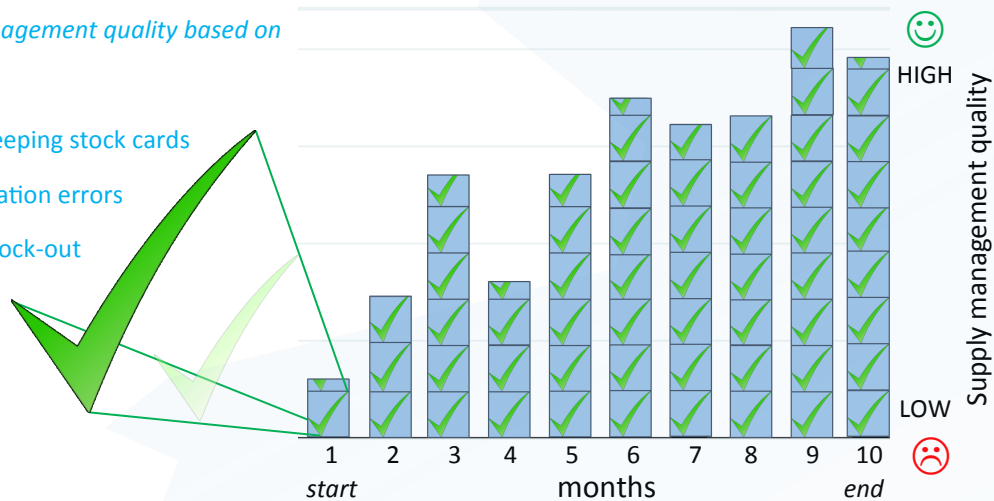


- Commonly used methods are less prone to stock-outs.
- Stock-outs may cause low uptake, rather than or in addition to low demand.
- Health care providers need to be stimulated to both offer and order all methods consistently.

We observed an improvement in supply management ...

We scored supply management quality based on

- ✓ keeping stock cards
- ✓ no calculation errors
- ✓ no reported stock-out



... that was mainly due to monthly audits.



- Through supportive supervision, health care workers felt recognized and appreciated which encouraged them to improve supply management and hence the quality of their services.