

Testing the Credibility of LQAS as a Sampling Mechanism for a Client Revalidation Study for Family Planning vouchers

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Background: LQAS, also known as lot quality assurance sampling, is a sampling mechanism readily used by different sectors for their monitoring activities. LQAS was later adopted by the health sector because it was cost-effective. In this paper, we had used the data from a demand-side financing program implemented by Greenstar Social Marketing in association with David and Lucile Packard Foundation to validate the reliability of LQAS as a sampling procedure.

Methods: In this study an experimental design was deployed to assess the reliability of LQAS. The study required us to combine two datasets; one referring to the main program data of the demand side voucher program and the other representing the sample drawn via LQAS for validating these vouchers differences in outcome was compared between both data sets. Based on the comparison, it was decided whether LQAS is a reliable sampling mechanism or not.

Results: In order to check for agreement of data from both datasets, McNemar's test was used. Program data showed that FP adoption was 97.89% and its validation through LQAS showed it to be 98.1% (no statistically significant difference between the two data collection techniques). Proportion of clients that received immunization (98.87%) was not significantly different from clients validated (99.08%). However the proportion of clients who received PNC services (92.32%) were different from the proportion of clients verified through the sample drawn via LQAS (99.58%) FP counseling was 92.32% and in LQAS 99.01% 2 out of 4 study variables had good agreement.

Discussion/Conclusion: LQAS is an efficient sampling approach that is adopted by diverse sectors along with health to facilitate the monitoring activities. Requiring lesser sample as compared to the alternate sampling methodologies, LQAS not only minimizes the cost but also shortens the time frame required for data collection. The results validated that LQAS is a reliable sampling approach to facilitate small scale monitoring or validation activities. There were a few anomalies observed in the results ,however, the sampling approach needs to be tested in future for more commendations.