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Role of child health clinics in promoting use of insecticide-treated nets among children under five years in Nyamira district, Kenya.

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BACKGROUND: Maternal child health clinics are the ideal places to meet and sensitise all the mothers with children under five years on the use of insecticide-treated nets in the prevention of malaria.

OBJECTIVE: To determine whether child health clinics are promoting the use of insecticide-treated nets in malaria prevention among children.

DESIGN: Cross-sectional, descriptive study.

SETTING: Eight health centres in Nyamira District.

SUBJECTS: Four hundred mothers bringing their children aged five years and below to the child health clinics between August and October 2003.

RESULTS: Two hundred and eighty four mothers (71%) had not received any information on the use of insecticide-treated nets while at the MCH clinics. Only 50% of the clinics had bed nets/ITNs posters mounted on their premises. Out of those clinics with posters, only in 50% of them had bed net posters seen. Very few mothers (36.2%) had seen the bed net/ITNs posters. None of the healthcare providers used bed net/ITNs posters to educate the mothers. None of the insecticide-treated net leaflets were issued.

CONCLUSION: Despite the fact that maternal child health clinics were well placed in promoting the use of insecticide-treated nets to the mothers who brought their under five year children, very little was being done to this effect. MCH clinics need to be more aggressive in motivating mothers to use insecticide-treated nets.