Evaluating DDN-READY, a new tool to strengthen healthcare staff confidence to Deliver Different News to families

Tamsyn Eida
Centre for Health Services Studies, University of Kent
Sally Kendall
Centre for Health Services Studies, University of Kent
Esther Mugweni
Institute for Health Visiting

Background
The first 1001 days from pregnancy to the time a child is two years old are critical for their physical, emotional and cognitive development. When life-changing health conditions are identified here, it presents a different parenting journey from the expected. Delivering this type of news to parents must be done sensitively and compassionately by healthcare professionals (HCPs), however there is a lack of consistent training. This can have serious implications for the family, the baby's development and the professional.

Aim of the study
To test the effectiveness and scalability of a co-produced, evidence-based training package, based on the READY framework, to equip HCPs with the confidence and skills to deliver different news (DDN).

Methods
Our mixed methods evaluation of the training used a pre/post intervention design. We collected quantitative data from 204 HCPs who had received DDN-READY training and qualitative interview data from 19 of these HCPs, four managers and one parent who had news delivered by a DDN-READY-trained HCP.

Results
204 health professionals received the training. Over 80% had no prior DDN training. We found statistically significant improvements in the HCPs' confidence and skills to provide sensitive, responsive, balanced care to families post training. The strongest improvement was in being better able to structure DN conversations with families.

Conclusions and implications
The DDN-READY training package may equip professionals to reduce the psychological distress associated with receiving DN. This may prevent mental ill-health across the life course. Rollout of DDN-READY training is imperative to ensure families are adequately supported.