

UPTAKE OF FOLIC ACID FORTIFIED FLOURS AMONG WOMEN OF  
REPRODUCTIVE AGE IN IFAKARA, MOROGORO REGION

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Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics**



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**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in (partial) Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Science (Applied Epidemiology) of  
Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences  
October 2017**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences a dissertation entitled *Uptake of folic acid fortified flours among women of reproductive age in Ifakara, Morogoro region*, in (partial) fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science (Applied Epidemiology) of Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences.

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**DECLARATION AND COPYRIGHT**

I, **Ipyana Frank Mwandelile**, declare that this **dissertation** is my own original work and that it has not been presented and will not be presented to any other University for similar or any other degree award.

Signature.....

Date.....

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my lovely wife Oliver Mwasenga and my two sons, Brian and Brighton. Their good wish, encouragement, support and prayers have played an important role. I know a great vacuum they felt in my absence or tense times when I could not offer my all love to them.

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## ABSTRACT

### Background

Folic acid food fortification has been in place for over two decades after several studies proving folic acid beneficial effects on prevention of neural tube defects (NTDs). Tanzania has adopted mandatory fortification policy on wheat and maize flour. Essentially all wheat flour in Tanzania is fortified. Fortified maize flour from smaller mills is also available but less common. Uptake of fortified flours is important in prevention of the micronutrient deficiency among women of reproductive age (WRA) as well as NTDs to unborn babies. However, the uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA is unknown. Therefore this study intended to determine awareness, uptake of folic acid fortified flours, influencing factors and reasons hindering uptake among WRA in Ifakara Town Council, Morogoro region.

### Methods

This was a cross sectional study involving 698 WRA, conducted from March to April 2017 in Ifakara. A multistage cluster random sampling technique was used to select study participants. Pretested interviewer administered questionnaires and observation checklists were used to collect information on uptake and availability of fortified wheat and maize flours from local retail shops. Data were managed and analyzed by Epi Info 7 and STATA 13. Association between uptake of folic acid fortified flours and independent variables was assessed using odds ratios through cross tabulations and significance testing was done using Chi square or Fishers's exact test. P value of 0.05 was considered significant. Factors with p-value of  $\leq 0.2$  at bivariate analysis including conventional confounders such as age were entered in multiple logistic regression model to assess significant independent factors associated with fortified flours uptake among WRA and to control for potential confounders.

## **Results**

A total of 698 WRA participated in the study. Awareness of folic acid and fortified flours were found to be 6.9% (5.2%-9.0%) and 7.5% (5.7%-9.6%) respectively. The uptake of fortified flours was found to be 63.3% (59.7%-66.8%). Fortified wheat flour was found available in all 9 villages involved in the study while fortified maize flour was found in only one village. Factors that were significantly associated with fortified flours uptake included; Being employed, AOR=1.99(1.27-3.13), household size of 5 or more people, AOR=1.37(1.02-1.85) as well as nulliparity, parity of 1-4 children, AOR=2.74(1.54-4.87) and 1.92(1.17-3.13) respectively and awareness of folic acid, AOR=2.67(1.37-5.19). The common reasons mentioned to hinder uptake of fortified flours included: not knowing that the flour is fortified and unaffording to buy fortified flours.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

Uptake of fortified flours among WRA is relatively high however, low for maize flour accompanied with low awareness of folic acid and existence of fortified flours. All 9 villages involved in the study had an access to fortified wheat flour and only one village had an access to fortified maize flour. Being employed, having fewer children, household size of 5 or more people and awareness of folic acid are significant influencing factors for uptake of folic acid fortified flours. Not knowing that flour is fortified and unaffordability were commonly mentioned hindering reasons for fortified flours uptake. To increase uptake of fortified flours, institutions like Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC) should be used to increase awareness on the benefits of folic acid fortified flours among women and the general community.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION .....	ii
DECLARATION AND COPYRIGHT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xiv
DEFINITION/OPERATIONAL TERMS .....	xv
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Background.....	1
1.2. Problem Statement.....	2
1.3. Conceptual Framework.....	3
1.4. Rationale .....	5
1.5. Research questions .....	5
1.6. Objectives .....	6
1.6.1. Broad objective .....	6
1.6.2. Specific objectives.....	6
CHAPTER TWO.....	7
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7

2.1 What is Folate or Folic acid.....	7
2.2 Folate rich sources .....	7
2.3 Folate deficiency.....	7
2.4 Folic acid food fortification impact .....	7
2.5 Folic acid food fortification adverse effects .....	8
2.6 Awareness of folic acid .....	8
2.7 Awareness of existence of fortified flours.....	9
2.8 Uptake of fortified flours among WRA.....	9
2.9 Factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours.....	9
CHAPTER THREE .....	11
METHODOLOGY .....	11
3.1. Study Area .....	11
3.2. Study Design .....	11
3.3. Study Population .....	11
3.4. Sample Size .....	12
3.5. Sampling Procedure.....	13
3.6. Inclusion Criteria .....	13
3.7. Exclusion Criteria.....	14
3.8. Recruitment and training of research assistants .....	14
3.10. Data Collection .....	14
3.12. Data management and analysis.....	15
3.12.1. Data quality control.....	15
3.12.2. Data analysis .....	15
3.13. Ethical considerations.....	16

CHAPTER FOUR .....	17
RESULTS.....	17
4.1. Socio demographic and economic characteristics .....	17
4.2. Use of ANC services during last pregnancy.....	19
4.3. Awareness of folic acid .....	19
4.4. Awareness of existence of fortified flours.....	21
4.5. Uptake of folic acid fortified flours .....	23
4.6. Availability of folic acid fortified flours .....	26
4.7. Factors associated with folic acid fortified flours uptake at Bivariate and Multivariate level.....	27
4.9. Reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours .....	29
CHAPTER FIVE .....	30
DISCUSSION.....	30
5.1. Awareness of folic acid .....	30
5.3. Uptake of folic acid fortified flours.....	31
5.4. Factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours.....	31
5.5. Availability and price of fortified flours in Ifakara .....	32
5.6. Reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours .....	32
5.7. Study limitation(s).....	32
CHAPTER SIX .....	33
CONCLUSION .....	33
CHAPTER SEVEN .....	34
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	34
REFERENCES .....	35
APPENDICES .....	39

Appendix 1a: INFORMED CONSENT FORM- English Version.....	39
Appendix 1b: INFORMED CONSENT FORM- Swahili version .....	42
Appendix 1c: QUESTIONNAIRE - English version.....	44
Appendix 1d: QUESTIONNAIRE - Swahili version.....	52
Appendix 1e: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST .....	59
Appendix 1f: Cluster control form .....	60
Appendix 1g: Ethical clearance.....	61

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the respondents, (N=698) .....	17
Table 2: Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the respondents, (N=698) .....	18
Table 3: Use of ANC services during last pregnancy (Those who attended ANC, N=577) .....	19
Table 4: Awareness of folic acid by Socio-demographic/economic characteristics and use of ANC services (N=698) .....	20
Table 5: Awareness of existence of folic acid fortified flours by Socio-demographic/economic characteristics and use of ANC services (N=698).....	22
Table 6: Uptake of folic acid fortified flours by Socio-demographic and economic characteristics (N=698) .....	24
Table 7: Uptake of fortified flours by use of ANC services and awareness of folic acid/fortified flours .....	25
Table 8: Availability of folic acid fortified flours in the study area (N=57). .....	26
Table 9: Factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours .....	28

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework ..... 4  
Figure 2: Reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours (N=567) ..... 29

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CDC	Centers for Disease Control
EPI	Expanded Program of Immunization
FACT	Fortification Assessment Coverage Tool
HKI	Helen Keller International
LMICs	Lower and Middle Income Countries
MMWR	Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
MOHCDGEC	Ministry of Health Community Development Gender Elderly and Children
MUHAS	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NFFA	National Food Fortification Alliance
NTD	Neural tube defects
OPD	Out Patient Department
PPS	Probability Proportion to Size
RMO	Regional Medical Officer
TC	Town Council
TFELTP	Tanzania Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program
TFNC	Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre
TFP	Targeted Fortified Products
Tshs	Tanzanian shillings
USA	United States of America
USD	United States of America Dollar
WHO	World Health Organization
WRA	Women of Reproductive Age

**DEFINITION/OPERATIONAL TERMS**

*Food fortification:* refers to addition of micronutrients to processed foods

*Folic acid:* Any form of folic acid including folic acid single tablets, folic acid powder, multivitamin containing folic acid and folic acid fortified foods

*Fortified flours uptake:* Uptake of folic acid fortified wheat or maize flour products within 7 days prior interview

*Folic acid fortified flour:* Wheat and maize flour containing folic acid, iron, vitamin B12, zinc, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin A and folic acid, iron, vitamin B12 respectively

*Fortified flour and folic acid fortified flour:* used interchangeably

*Awareness:* Having heard or seen anything about folic acid or existence of fortified flours

*Women of reproductive age (WRA):* Women who are in their active reproductive years. In this case considered to be 18-49 years.

*Street:* A public road in a city or town, with houses and buildings on one or both sides

*Hamlet:* A settlement smaller than a village

*Household:* People who slept in the house last night and ate from the same cooking pot



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background

Food fortification has a far long history in developed countries for control of various micronutrient and vitamin deficiencies such as vitamin A and D, B vitamins, iron and iodine successfully (1). Adoption of folic acid food fortification has been in place for over two decades after several studies proving folic acid beneficial effects on prevention of Neural Tube Defects (NTDs). In USA and Canada folic acid food fortification was mandatory since late 1990's (2). To date there are over fifty countries with mandatory folic acid wheat flour fortification regulations (3).

Consumption of a multivitamin containing 400mcg of folic acid daily among WRA is the recommended amount of folic acid known to reduce NTDs and other birth defects (4). In developed countries despite sufficient knowledge a higher proportion of WRA do not implement the recommendations to take folic acid periconceptionally and a substantial proportion remain unaware of the requirement despite many public-health campaigns(5). Supplements intake requires behaviour change while mass fortification does not; For this reason fortification of foods with folic acid for mass consumption is considered important for increasing blood levels of folic acid in the population (4,6).

Folic acid fortification is cost-saving. Data from the US and other countries affirm that fortification saves up to 299-603 million USD/year related to direct medical and indirect costs like parental care for spina bifida and preventing up to 767 cases of spina bifida annually. MMWR, 2010 reports that each 1 USD invested in fortification about 100 USD are saved (6,7). Despite the fact that food fortification is a very cost effective public health intervention, an obvious requirement is adequate consumption of fortified foods by a large proportion of the individuals targeted in a population (1). This implies that large population should be covered with availability and easy access of fortified foods.

Tanzania has passed a policy for mandatory fortification of commercial wheat and maize flour with effect from 2011. Wheat flour is fortified with folic acid, iron, vitamin B12, zinc, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and vitamin A, while maize flour is fortified with folic acid, iron and vitamin B12. Most common used wheat flour is produced by few large companies which do fortification.

To the contrary maize flour is produced by many small scale millers who have limited access to resources or incentives to fortify their products (8). Morogoro region is among regions in which SANKU fortification project is operating. The project supports some small-scale millers to conduct maize flour fortification by providing fortification dossifiers, premixes and technical assistance (9).

Despite the recommendations for use of fortified flours among WRA and the general population, there is little information on uptake of fortified flours among WRA in Tanzania ever since the policy was introduced.

This study intended to assess uptake of folic acid fortified flours, influencing factors and reasons hindering uptake among WRA in Ifakara.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

NTDs are among major congenital anomalies affecting infants worldwide. They rank among the common causes of mortality and disabilities in infants (10). Studies in Lower and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) have demonstrated a prevalence rate of 2.05/1000 taking into account live births stillbirths and termination of pregnancies (11). There is lack of systematically collected birth defects surveillance data in Tanzania. However, information from retrospective hospital records reviews found an incidence of 3.02/1000 live births at Muhimbili National hospital, (12) and a recent study done in Dar es salaam shows an NTDs prevalence of 9.9/10,000 live births (13).

Food fortification with folic acid has been recommended as one of the strategic option for prevention of NTDs and controlling the micronutrient deficiency among WRA (2,4). Consumption of fortified flours by WRA is one of the effective methods to prevent NTDs to

infants expected to be borne by WRA, since a large proportion of pregnancies are unplanned even in high-income countries (4)

A study done in Australia found an uptake of folic acid fortified foods of 61%. It further stipulates that years of education, family income and timing of pregnancy were factors that influenced uptake. Mothers who had lower level of education and lower family income were found to be less likely to take folic acid tablets or foods or beverages with added folate (14).

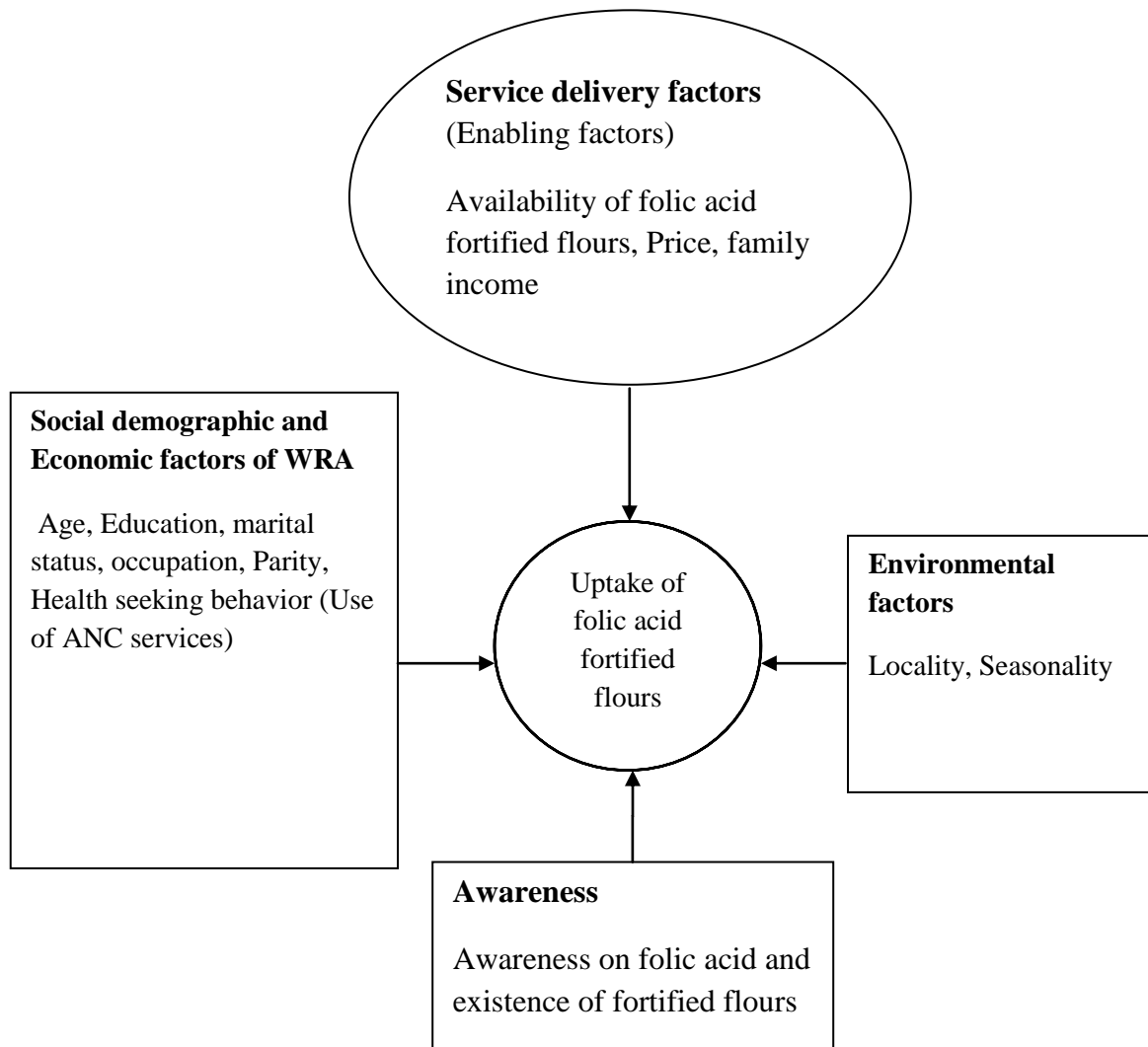
Tanzania has adopted mandatory wheat and maize flour fortification policy as a measure to combat micronutrient deficiencies among women of childbearing age, (used in other countries).

However, uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA in Tanzania is unknown.

Therefore, this study helps to understand the magnitude of fortified flours uptake among women of reproductive age, factors influencing and reasons hindering uptake in Ifakara.

### **1.3. Conceptual Framework**

The figure on next page shows the relationship that may exist between factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours and uptake of folic acid fortified flours.



**Figure 1:** *Conceptual Framework*

The framework shows the relationship that may exist between uptake of fortified flours and women socio-demographic characteristics such as Age, education, parity, use of ANC services, awareness of folic acid, and awareness of existence of fortified flours as well as availability, price and family income. Socio-demographic characteristics like education may influence uptake due to knowledge gained at school or through information seeking behavior among this group. Socio-

economic characteristics like income may influence uptake in a sense that those with more income tend to have high purchasing power and hence easy access to fortified flours. Those who are aware of folic acid and existence of fortified flours may have more uptake by further seeking benefits of the products and hence increasing demand to them.

Environmental factors that may influence uptake include locality of WRA and seasonal variations. However, these factors could not be studied because the study was done in a small area of the same district. Seasonality may influence uptake in a sense that WRA may tend to use their own flours produced during harvesting time and therefore reducing the possibility of buying fortified flours.

#### **1.4. Rationale**

In Tanzania like in other countries pregnancies are unplanned by large proportion rendering difficulties to target interventions during the peri-conception period. Although the importance of peri-conception use of folic acid among pregnant women to prevent neural tube defects is scientifically well known, evidence shows that most of WRA do not fulfill this requirement when they wish to bear children. This creates a demand to provide adequate nutrition to all women throughout their reproductive years (4).

Food fortification with folic acid has been recommended as one of the strategic option for controlling the micronutrient deficiency but this can only correct the deficiency if the targeted population has access and do use the fortified foods.

With ongoing maize fortification project in Ifakara and large industries supply of fortified wheat flours in the area, findings from this study will add into the body of knowledge and help in designing strategies to increase uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA.

#### **1.5. Research questions**

- i. What is the proportion of WRA in Ifakara who are aware of folic acid in Ifakara?
- ii. What is the proportion of WRA in Ifakara who are aware of the existence of fortified flours?

- iii. What is the proportion of WRA who ate folic acid fortified flours within seven days prior to the survey in Ifakara?
- iv. Is fortified flour available in retail local shops along study sites in Ifakara?
- v. What factors influence uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA in Ifakara?
- vi. What are the reasons hindering uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA in Ifakara?

## **1.6. Objectives**

### **1.6.1. Broad objective**

To determine uptake of folic acid fortified flours and the associated factors among women of reproductive age in Ifakara Town Council, Morogoro Region, Tanzania

### **1.6.2. Specific objectives**

- i. To determine the proportion of WRA who are aware of folic in Ifakara
- ii. To determine the proportion of WRA who are aware of existence of fortified flours in Ifakara.
- iii. To determine the proportion of WRA who ate folic acid fortified flours within seven days prior to the survey in Ifakara.
- iv. To assess availability of fortified flours in retail local shops along study sites in Ifakara.
- v. To determine factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA in Ifakara.
- vi. To determine reasons hindering uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA in Ifakara

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 What is Folate or Folic acid**

Folate is a form of vitamin B9, naturally-occurring. The term folate denotes a generic name for a group of related compounds with similar nutritional properties while folic acid (pteroylmonoglutamic acid) is a synthetic form of vitamin B9 used in supplements and added to processed food products like flour and breakfast cereals (15). Folic acid is a water soluble B vitamin which is involved in amino acid metabolism (16,17).

#### **2.2 Folate rich sources**

The richest sources include liver, dark green vegetables and kidney. Others include fruits, pulses and nuts (17,18). Most diets provide an estimate of 200-400mcg/day, however losses may be 50-90% during cooking (19).

Folate can also be obtained as a supplement in form of vitamin or fortified foods (20).

#### **2.3 Folate deficiency**

Deficiency of folate is commonly due to poor diet but may also result from malabsorption caused by medicines such as anti-epileptics. Deficiency leads to macrocytic anaemia a second common nutritional anaemia after iron deficiency. During pregnancy folic acid deficiency has been found to cause neural tube defects in babies (17) hence pregnant women are advised to take 400mcg/kg of folic acid daily due to increased demand (19). The same applies to pregnant mothers with history of recurrent NTDs whose recommended dose is 4mg from the day pregnancy is planned to 3 months post conception (21)

#### **2.4 Folic acid food fortification impact**

In 1992, the United States of America, Public Health service, recommended that all women of childbearing age should use 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to reduce their risk of having an

NTD affected pregnancy. In 1998, mandatory fortification of cereal grain products labeled as enriched was instituted. There was a decline of NTDs prevalence by 28% from 1999-2011 following fortification (22,23).

In 2003 South Africa fortified staple foods with folic acid and the prevalence of NTDs declined by 30.5% from 1.41 to 0.98 per 1,000 births (24).

### **2.5 Folic acid food fortification adverse effects**

Consumption of folic acid has raised concerns that it might cause some harmful effects such as blunting of antifolate effect in drugs like methotrexate and phenytoin, progression of nervedamage in persons with vitamin B12 deficiency, accelerated elderly cognitive decline, cancer and epigenetic hypermethylation. However these concerns have been associated with consumption of high folic acid supplements other than from fortification (6). When recommended levels of folic acid are taken, there has been no conclusive evidence that folic acid causes the mentioned concerns. Therefore to ensure that folic acid does not bring negative consequences to public health continued monitoring and research is required (6).

### **2.6 Awareness of folic acid**

Women have should be aware of the benefits of folic acid if they have to use it. Several studies have been done to assess awareness of WRA on folic acid. Studies in Europe, Nepal, New Zealand, USA, and Honduras found proportions of awareness of 70%, 40%, 98%, 84% and 46.4% respectively (25–29). Another study conducted in Turkey found that 42.2% of the WRA reported to have heard of folic acid (30).

The awareness of folic acid and linkage with prevention of birth defects among WRA has been reported by several studies as well. A study done by Köken et al. 2013 found that 48.2% of those who heard about folic acid reported that it can prevent birth defects (30). Studies done in Europe, New Zealand and Honduras found that 25%, 28% and 62% respectively of participants who were aware of folic acid stated that it can prevent some birth defects (25,27,31).



## **2.7 Awareness of existence of fortified flours**

A study that included rural and urban women attending health care in India, found that knowledge about targeted fortified foods (TFP's) to pregnant women was 53.3% among rural and 65.5% among women of urban population. Doctors/health care workers were the knowledge source about TFP's. The same study found that 80% and 89.33% of rural and urban mothers respectively had an opinion that TFP's should be used for pregnant women (32).

A study done in Qatari among WRA, 40.6% who heard about folate were aware that green leafy vegetables had been fortified with folic acid (33). An Australian survey on community knowledge and attitudes regarding the fortification of food with folic acid shows that mothers who were aged 18-44 years were more aware that folate was fortified to breakfast cereals and other products than those with 45 years or above (34).

A study by Oddy et al. 2007, revealed that 47% of the women who participated in the study had no awareness or were unsure that folic acid was added to foods in Australia (35). Another study in Uganda found no women heard about food fortification or recognized signs on available fortified foods (36).

## **2.8 Uptake of fortified flours among WRA**

A National survey conducted in Senegal found that there was high consumption of fortifiable wheat flour (90%), among WRA (37). Another survey in Uganda found that 30% and 28% of participants consumed folic acid fortified wheat and maize flour respectively at least once on survey days(38). In Tanzania 51.5 % of the general population consume wheat flour but only 33.1% consume fortified wheat flour (8). The same survey found that 75% of the population consume maize flour but only 2.5% consume fortified maize flour (8).

## **2.9 Factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours**

There are limited studies on factors influencing uptake of fortified flours among WRA. One study done in rural and peri-urban areas of Kenya about factors determining use of fortified foods (vitamin A fortified sugar) found that age and income had negative influence on uptake

while information from peers or other sources such as media, trust of fortification process, awareness of fortified foods and knowledge on importance of vitamin A had positive influence. An increase in age reduced by 1% of consumption fortified sugar while income reduced by 18%. Knowledge of the importance of vitamin A in diets increased the probability of consuming fortified sugar by 115% while consumer's awareness of vitamin A fortification increased the consumption of fortified sugar by 193% (39).

An Australian study found that mothers with a lower level of education and lower family income were less likely to take folic acid tablets, foods, or beverages with added folate (14).

In Tanzania there is limited information regarding uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA and factors influencing uptake. Therefore, this study intended at assessing uptake of folic acid fortified flours and associated factors among WRA in Ifakara.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Study Area**

The study was conducted in Ifakara Town Council, Kilombero district in Morogoro region. We selected Ifakara purposely due to being among high birth defects prevalent districts, particularly NTDs (40).

Ifakara Town Council is among nine councils of Morogoro region. It lies along Kilombero valley and most of its area extends below Udzungwa Mountains. Ifakara Town Council is bordered by Ulanga district to the south and most of its area by Kilombero district. The council has 9 wards, 16 villages, 11 streets and 64 hamlets with a population of 106,424 people. There are 24,269 households with an average household size of 4.5 people (41). The estimated total number of WRA is 25,542 (42).

The main economic activities include subsistence farming, fishing and animal husbandry. Staple foods used by majority are paddy, maize and banana, which serve as cash crops as well.

With regard to health care services, the council has 13 health facilities; 2 of them are owned by the government, 9 by private owners and 2 by religious owners. Among these facilities, there is one hospital and health centre and the rest are dispensaries.

As part of Morogoro region, there is SANKU flour fortification project in Ifakara, which provides training, equipment and fortification premixes to maize flour small scale millers (9).

#### **3.2. Study Design**

This was a community based cross sectional study conducted from March-April, 2017.

#### **3.3. Study Population**

The study involved women of reproductive age (18-49 years) in Ifakara town council.

### 3.4. Sample Size

The sample size was calculated using Kish Leslie formula, (1965) for cross sectional studies;

$$n = \frac{(Z^2 \times p \times q) \times DEFF}{d^2}$$

Where

Z = Standard normal deviate at 95% confidence interval corresponding to 1.96

p = prevalence of folic acid fortified wheat flour consumption in community, 33.1% (8)

q = 1 - p

d = margin of error, assumed to be 5%

DEFF = design effect = assumed to be 1.8 (arbitrary deff) for 'p' around 25-30% (43)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 33.1 \times (100 - 33.1) \times 1.8}{5^2} = 621$$

Assuming non-response of 10%, the minimum required sample size was  $621 / (100\% - 10\%) = 690$  WRA.

Our study used a minimum of 30 clusters, which is popular in population-based surveys (44).

Given a sample size of 690 WRA, number of households required per cluster were  $690 / 30 = 24$

#### **Number of households needed;**

Given Household size = 4.5

Proportion of WRA in Ifakara =  $25,542 / 106,424 = 24\% = 0.24$

Then number of households required=  $690/(4.5 \times 0.24) = 639$  households (45).

Assuming 10% non response=  $639/(100\% - 10\%) = 710$  households

Therefore, total households with WRA required were 710.

### **3.5. Sampling Procedure**

A multistage cluster sampling technique was used to select participants of the study. We first selected five wards by simple random sampling method from nine wards followed by selection of nine villages from 16 villages as first stage units by using a similar method. Total population of villages was used to calculate required number of clusters per each village. Thirty clusters (hamlets/streets) were selected as second stage units by probability proportion to size (PPS). Twentyfour households from each cluster were selected to be involved in the study as third stage units. Households included in the study were selected randomly using WHO EPI Cluster sampling method where by a hamlet/street central location was identified and a direction selected at random by spinning a pen. All houses were counted in straight line following this direction until the edge of the hamlet/street was reached. One of the counted houses was picked at random to create the starting point of the study. The second house visited was one that was nearest to the front door of the first household visited. Then followed by next household until sample size was reached.

Only one eligible woman of the household found was included in the study. If more than one woman of the household was found eligible, numbers were assigned and only one was selected by simple random sampling method. If no member of the household was eligible we moved to the next household. Refusals or absent women were accounted as non respondents.

### **3.6. Inclusion Criteria**

Females aged 18-49 years found in selected households who gave consent to participate were included in the study.

### **3.7. Exclusion Criteria**

WRA 18-49 years who were unable to communicate/talk or women who had stayed in the council for less than 6 months were excluded in the study.

### **3.8. Recruitment and training of research assistants**

Research assistants who had a minimum of secondary education were recruited and trained for two days on the purpose of the study, data collection tools and methodology of the study.

### **3.9. Pretesting of tools**

After being trained, the research assistants conducted pretesting of data collection tools. This was done at Sagamaganga village in Kilombero district, a site different from the study area. This ensured that all unclear questions or questions with improper flow were identified and were corrected before the tools were finalized for actual data collection.

### **3.10. Data Collection**

Before data collection, the survey team paid a visit to the Town Council Medical Officer for self-introduction and the Town Council Medical Officer introduced us to the Town Council Executive Director who offered the permission to conduct the study. On behalf of the Town Council Executive Director, the Town Council Medical Officer wrote formal letters explaining the purpose of the study to introduce the team to selected villages. Communication through mobile phones to local leaders was done to inform them of the dates when we will visit their respective areas. In each cluster, leaders or local guides were used to introduce the research team to the members of households. Data were collected using interviewer administered Kiswahili interview schedules.

The Principal investigator using observation checklists did assessment of the availability of fortified flours in retail shops along study sites. Brands with fortification logo and price per kilogram for both wheat and maize flour at retail shops within each cluster were noted.

### **3.11. Variables**

- i. Dependent variable
  - Uptake of folic acid fortified flours.
  
- ii. Independent variables
  - Individual factors (predisposing factors); These included age, education, income, marital status, occupation, parity, health seeking behavior (during last pregnancy), pregnancy plan and awareness of folic acid and existence of folic acid fortified flours.
  - Service delivery factors (enabling factors); This included availability of folic acid fortified flours

### **3.12. Data management and analysis**

#### **3.12.1. Data quality control**

The Principal Investigator supervised closely research assistants during data collection period and did on spot cross checking of filled questionnaires before the interviewees leave. Missing information and errors conducted during interview were corrected immediately in the field before leaving the cluster to ensure data quality (i.e. ensuring questionnaires were complete and any applicable question was answered).

Data were entered in Epi Info 7 and analyzed by Epi Info 7 and STATA 13. Data cleaning by running frequencies to account for inconsistencies, double entries and other errors was done. Before data analysis coding of some variables including uptake of fortified flours, age group, marital status, education status was conducted.

#### **3.12.2. Data analysis**

Univariate analysis was done to describe general characteristics of the study sample and determining uptake of folic acid fortified flours. Categorical variables were summarized by running frequencies while continuous variables were summarized by measures of central tendency and dispersion.

Association of uptake of folic acid fortified flours with independent variables was determined by odds ratios (OR) through cross tabulations at bivariate analysis. Chi square and Fisher exact tests were used to test for associations of fortified flours uptake with independent variables. Statistical significance was set at p-value less or equal to 0.05.

Multiple logistic regression analysis was done to ascertain independent factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA while controlling for potential confounders.

All variables with p-value  $\leq 0.2$  at bivariate level as well as conventional confounders such as age were added in the multiple logistic regression model.

### **3.13. Ethical considerations**

The Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) institutional review board reviewed the study protocol for ethical issues and approved it before data collection. In addition, permission to conduct the study was sought and granted from Regional, council and local authorities in Ifakara town council.

The study involved participants who signed the written consent and were voluntarily willing to participate after explaining to them the purpose of the study. For individuals who were illiterate a thumb print was used. Participants were informed of freedom to withdraw at any time from the study without impinging their social needs. Data collected were kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this study; No participant name or identifier was included in data collection tools. Questionnaires were kept enclosed in a cabinet and the Principal investigator only accessed electronic data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 4.1. Socio demographic and economic characteristics

A total of 698 WRA participated in the study, a response rate of 98.3%. Nearly half 333 (47.7%) were from Ifakara village. Their median age was 30 years with an age range of 18-49 years. Majority of them had primary level of education 564 (80.8%) and unemployed 501 (71.7%). Nearly two third 420 (60.2%) were married or cohabiting. More than half 365 (52.3%) belonged to households with a household size of equal or more than five people [Table 1& 2].

**Table 1:** *Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the respondents, (N=698)*

Village of residence	Number	%
Ifakara	333	47.7
Mlabani	162	23.2
Ihanga	46	6.6
Mahutanga	44	6.3
Kilama	23	3.3
Kining'ina	21	3.0
Lungongole	23	3.3
Machipi	23	3.3
Michenga	23	3.3

**Table 2:** *Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the respondents, (N=698)*

Characteristic	Number	%
Age group		
18-24	195	27.9
25-35	271	38.8
36+	232	33.2
Education		
Primary or less	564	80.8
Secondary or more	134	19.2
Marital status		
Married/ Cohabiting	420	60.2
Divorced/separated/Widowed	88	12.6
Single	190	27.2
Occupation		
Employed (including Self employed/business)	197	28.3
Unemployed (including Peasant/Maid/housewife/student)	501	71.7
Income/month		
< 150,000	121	17.3
150,000-325,000	441	63.2
> 325,000	36	5.2
Don't know	100	14.3
Household size		
<5	333	47.7
≥5	365	52.3
Relationship with Head of HH		
Head of HH	119	17.1
Wife/partner	399	57.2
Others	180	25.8
Parity		
0	108	15.5
1-4	501	71.8
5+	89	12.8

#### 4.2. Use of ANC services during last pregnancy

Out of 698 WRA 590 (84.5%) had ever given birth while 108 (15.5%) of them had never given birth. Of those who have ever given birth 577 (97.7 %) of them reported to attend antenatal care during their last pregnancies. Of these 189 (32.8%) reported that they booked for antenatal care during the first trimester. Nearly two third, 356 (61.7%) reported that they attended antenatal care four times or more [Table 3].

**Table 3:** Use of ANC services during last pregnancy (Those who attended ANC, N=577)

		Number	%
Attended Antenatal care	Yes	577	97.8
	No	13	2.3
ANC visits booking			
	1 <sup>st</sup> trimester	189	32.8
	2 <sup>nd</sup> trimester	282	48.9
	3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester	70	12.1
	Don't know/remember	36	6.2
ANC visits number			
	1-3 times	152	26.3
	≥4 times	356	61.7
	Don't know/remember	69	11.9

#### 4.3. Awareness of folic acid

Among all WRA who participated in the study only 48 (6.9% (CI 5.2%-9.0%)) reported to have heard of folic acid. Among these only five (10.4%) heard that folic acid can prevent some birth defects. Awareness of folic acid was more among those with secondary education or more, 18 (13.4%) and the difference was statistically significant,  $p < 0.01$  [Table 4].

**Table 4:** Awareness of folic acid by Socio-demographic/economic characteristics and use of ANC services (N=698)

Characteristic	Aware of folic acid		P value
	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	
Heard of folic acid	48(6.9(5.2-9.0))	650(93.1)	
Age group			
18-24	17(8.7)	178(91.3)	0.49
25-35	17(6.3)	254(93.7)	
36+	14(6.0)	218(93.9)	
Education			
Primary or less	30(5.3)	534(94.7)	<0.01*
Secondary or more	18(13.4)	116(86.6)	
Marital status			
Married/ Cohabiting	32(7.6)	388(92.4)	0.41^
Divorced/separated/ Widowed	3(3.4)	85(96.6)	
Single	13(6.8)	177(93.2)	
Occupation			
Employed (including Self employed/business)	12(6.1)	185(93.9)	0.73
Unemployed (including Peasant/Maid/housewife/student)	36(7.2)	465(92.8)	
Income/month			
< 150,000	7(5.9)	114(94.2)	0.46^
150,000-325,000	29(6.6)	412(93.4)	
> 325,000	4(11.1)	32(88.9)	
Household size			
<5	21(6.3)	312(93.7)	0.68
≥5	27(6.4)	338(92.6)	
Parity			
0	8(7.4)	100(92.6)	0.72^
1-4	36(7.2)	465(92.8)	
5+	4(4.5)	85(95.5)	
Attended ANC last pregnancy			
Yes	40(6.9)	537(93.1)	1.00^
No	0(0)	13(100)	
ANC Booking			
1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester	16(8.5)	173(91.5)	0.55^
2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester	20(7.1)	262(92.9)	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester	3(4.3)	67(95.7)	
ANC visits number			
1-3 times	8(5.2)	144(94.7)	0.34
≥4 times	29(8.2)	327(91.8)	

Missing values for income, ANC booking and ANC visits number. \* Statistically significant; ^Fisher exact test

#### **4.4. Awareness of existence of fortified flours**

Only 52 (7.5% (CI 5.7%-9.6%)) reported to have heard of existence of folic acid fortified flours. There were no statistically significant differences in awareness of fortified flours with socio-demographic/economic characteristics and use of ANC services during last pregnancy. However, awareness is observed to decrease as age and income increases. Also WRA who booked for ANC early in first and second trimester of their last pregnancies have high awareness (8.9%) compared to those who booked for ANC late in third trimester [**Table 5**].

**Table 5:** Awareness of existence of folic acid fortified flours by Socio-demographic/economic characteristics and use of ANC services (N=698)

Aware of existence of fortified flours			
Characteristic	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	P value
Heard of fortified flours	52(7.5(5.7-9.6))	646(92.5)	
Age group			
18-24	17(8.7)	178(91.3)	0.56
25-35	21(7.8)	250(92.3)	
36+	14(6.0)	218(93.9)	
Education			
Primary or less	38(6.7)	526(93.3)	0.19
Secondary or more	14(10.5)	120(89.5)	
Marital status			
Married/ Cohabiting	29(6.9)	391(93.1)	0.79
Divorced/separated/ Widowed	7(7.9)	81(92.1)	
Single	16(8.4)	174(91.6)	
Occupation			
Employed (including Self-employed/business)	16(8.1)	181(91.9)	0.79
Unemployed (including Peasant/Maid/housewife/student)	36(7.2)	465(92.8)	
Income/month			
< 150,000	13(10.7)	108(89.2)	0.26 <sup>^</sup>
150,000-325,000	32(7.3)	409(92.7)	
> 325,000	1(2.8)	35(97.2)	
Household size			
<5	28(8.4)	305(91.6)	0.44
≥5	24(6.6)	341(93.4)	
Parity			
0	6(5.6)	102(94.4)	0.66
1-4	40(7.9)	461(92.0)	
5+	6(6.7)	83(93.3)	
Attended ANC			
Yes	46(7.9)	531(92.3)	0.61 <sup>^</sup>
No	0(0)	13(100)	
ANC Booking			
1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester	17(8.9)	172(91.0)	0.46 <sup>^</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester	25(8.9)	257(91.1)	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester	3(4.3)	67(95.7)	
ANC visits number			
1-3 times	9(5.9)	143(94.1)	0.17
≥4 times	36(10.1)	320(89.9)	

Missing values for income, ANC booking and ANC visits number. <sup>^</sup>Fisher exact test

#### 4.5. Uptake of folic acid fortified flours

Almost two-thirds 442/698 (63.3% (CI 59.7%-66.8%)) of women reported uptake of folic acid fortified flours at least once within 7 days prior the survey. Of these only three, (0.68%) had taken up fortified maize flour and, 436 (98.6%) had taken up wheat flour only. The other three (0.68%) had taken up both fortified maize and wheat flour.

Uptake of fortified flours was high, (74.6%) among WRA who had secondary education compared to those who had primary education or less and the difference was statistically significant,  $p < 0.01$ . Employed ones had a higher proportion of fortified flours uptake, (74.1%) compared to unemployed women and the difference was statistically significant,  $p < 0.001$ .

Moreover, those who had no children (nulliparous) had statistically significant high proportion, 71.3%,  $p < 0.01$  of uptake compared to those with children. Booking for antenatal care in first trimester was associated with high proportion of fortified flours uptake (63.9%) compared to those who booked late and the difference was statistically significant,  $p = 0.01$ . WRA who heard of folic acid had high proportion of fortified flours uptake 81.3% compared to those who had not heard of folic acid, the difference was statistically significant,  $p < 0.01$  [Table 6&7].

**Table 6:** Uptake of folic acid fortified flours by Socio-demographic and economic characteristics(N=698)

Uptake of fortified flours			
Characteristic	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	pvalue
Age group			0.63
18-24	129(66.2)	66(33.9)	
25-35	169(62.4)	102(37.6)	
36+	144(62.1)	88(37.9)	
Education			<0.01*
Primary or less	342(60.6)	222(37.9)	
Secondary or more	100(74.6)	34(25.4)	
Marital status			0.18
Married/ Cohabiting	261(62.1)	159(37.9)	
Divorced/separated/ Widowed	51(57.9)	37(42.1)	
Single	130(68.4)	60(31.6)	
Occupation			<0.001*
Employed (including Self employed/business)	146(74.1)	51(25.9)	
Unemployed (including Peasant/Maid/housewife/student)	296(59.1)	205(40.9)	
Income/month			0.29
< 150,000	74(61.2)	47(38.8)	
150,000-325,000	289(65.5)	152(34.5)	
> 325,000	27(75.0)	9(25.0)	
Household size			0.22
<5	203(60.9)	130(39.0)	
≥5	239(65.5)	126(34.5)	
Relationship with Head of HH			0.41
Head of HH	76(63.9)	43(36.1)	
Wife/partner	245(61.4)	154(38.6)	
Others	121(67.2)	59(32.8)	
Parity			<0.01*
0	77(71.3)	31(28.7)	
1-4	322(64.3)	179(35.7)	
5+	43(48.3)	46(51.7)	

Missing values for income\* Statistically significant



**Table 7:** *Uptake of fortified flours by use of ANC services and awareness of folic acid/fortified flours*

Uptake of fortified flours				
Characteristic		Yes n(%)	No n(%)	pvalue
Attended ANC				
	Yes	355(61.5)	222(38.5)	0.39 <sup>^</sup>
	No	10(76.9)	3(23.1)	
ANC Booking				
	1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester	129(63.9)	60(31.8)	0.01*
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester	177(62.8)	105(37.2)	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester	34(48.6)	36(51.4)	
ANC visits number				
	1-3 times	88(57.9)	64(42.1)	0.25
	≥4 times	227(63.8)	129(36.2)	
Heard of folic acid				
	Yes	39(81.3)	9(18.8)	<0.01*
	No	403(62.0)	247(38.0)	
Heard of fortified flours				
	Yes	37(71.2)	15(28.9)	0.22
	No	405(62.7)	241(37.3)	

Missing values for ANC booking and ANC visits number.\* Statistically significant

#### 4.6. Availability of folic acid fortified flours

Assessment of available brands of fortified flours involved 57 retail shops, which were available in the clusters selected for the study. Ifakara village had more shops visited 22 (38.6%) due to its number of clusters it had (10) compared to other villages. Every village had an access to fortified wheat flour but almost all villages had no fortified maize flour available [Table 8].

Differences in prices per kilogram were minimum ranging from 1200-1400 Tshs for wheat flour and 1800-2200 Tshs for maize flour. Maize flour prices were similar for both fortified and non-fortified brands. Shops in more periphery villages had the maximum prices.

**Table 8:** Availability of folic acid fortified flours in the study area (N=57).

Village	Wheat flour n(%)	Maize flour n(%)
Ifakara, n=22	22(100)	6(27.3)
Mlabani, n=17	17(100)	0(0)
Ihanga, n=5	4(80)	0(0)
Mahutanga, n=5	5(100)	0(0)
Kilama, n=2	2(100)	0(0)
Kining'ina, n =1	1(100)	0(0)
Lungongole, n=3	3(100)	0(0)
Machipi, n=1	1(100)	0(0)
Michenga, n=1	1(100)	0(0)

#### 4.7. Factors associated with folic acid fortified flours uptake at Bivariate and Multivariate level

**In Bivariate analysis** it was found that WRA who had secondary education or more were almost two times more likely to have taken up fortified flours than those who had primary education or less, the difference was statistically significant, OR=1.82(1.19-2.78). Those who were employed were almost two times more likely to have taken up fortified flours than unemployed, OR=1.98(1.37-2.87), the difference was statistically significant. It was also found that women who had no children had nearly three times of uptake of fortified flours compared to those with 5 children or more, OR=2.66(1.45-4.88). Those who had 1-4 children were almost two times more likely to have taken up fortified flours compared to those with 5 children or more, OR=1.92(1.22-3.04), the results are statistically significant. The odds of taking up folic acid were 2.6 times more among WRA who heard of folic acid compared to WRA who had not heard of folic acid, OR=2.66(1.26-5.60) [**Table 9**].

**Multiple logistic** regression analysis was done to control for potential confounding factors. Adjustment for cluster effect was done at this stage as well. Factors with  $p \leq 0.2$  at bivariate analysis were included in the multiple logistic regression model.

The results revealed that the odds of fortified flours uptake was almost two times among employed WRA compared to unemployed women, [AOR=1.99(1.27-3.13)]. The odds of taking up fortified flours was 37% more likely among households with 5 or more people compared to those with less than 5 people, [AOR=1.37(1.02-1.85)].

Moreover nulliparous women were nearly three times more likely to have taken up fortified flours compared to those who had five children or more, [AOR=2.74(1.54-4.87)]. Women who had 1-4 children were almost two times more likely to have taken up fortified flours compared to those who had five or more children, [AOR=1.92(1.17-3.13)].

Awareness of folic acid influenced uptake of fortified flours nearly three times compared to those who were not aware, [AOR=2.67(1.37-5.19)] [**Table 9**].

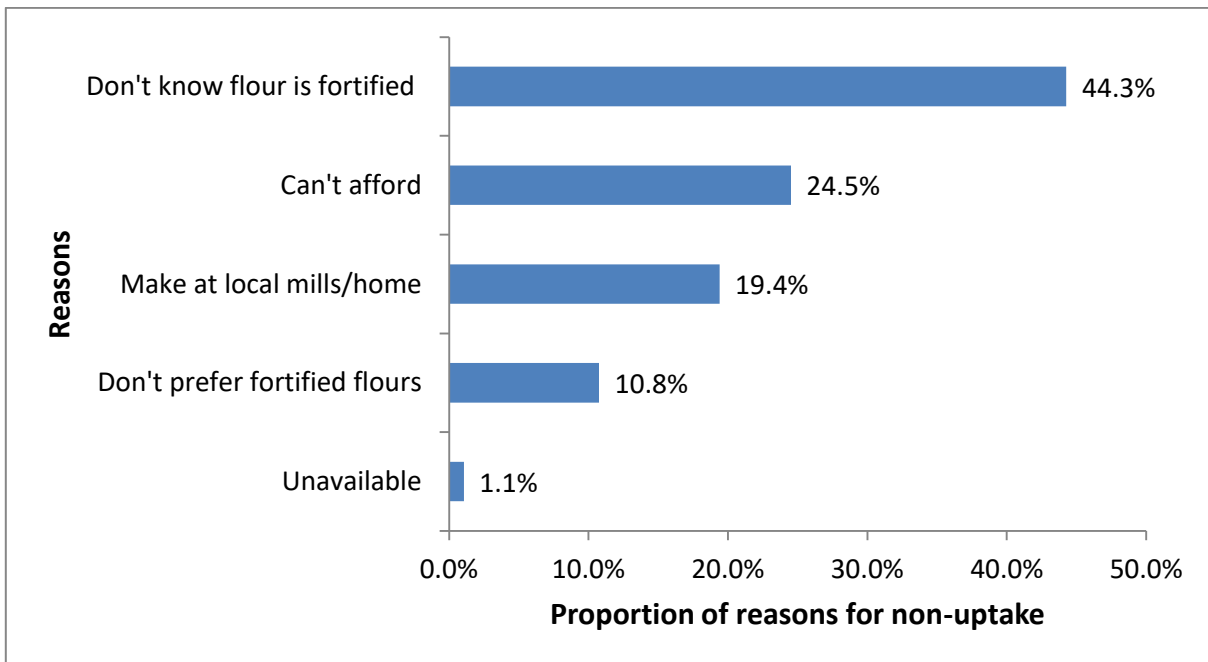
**Table 9: Factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours**

Uptake of fortified flours				
Factors		Yes n(%)	cOR (95% CI)	aOR(95% CI)
Age group				Ref
	18-24	129(66.2)		
	25-35	169(62.4)	0.85(0.58-1.25)	1.05(0.72-1.52)
	36+	144(62.1)	0.84(0.56-1.25)	1.23(0.72-2.11)
Education				Ref
	Primary or less	342(60.6)		
	Secondary or more	100(74.6)	1.82(1.19-2.78)	1.41(0.87-2.30)
Marital status				Ref
	Married/ Cohabiting	261(62.1)		
	Divorced/separated/ Widowed	51(57.9)	0.84(0.53-1.34)	0.89(0.48-1.69)
	Single	130(68.4)	1.32(0.92-1.90)	1.06(0.71-1.59)
Occupation				
	Employed (including Self employed/business)	146(74.1)	1.98(1.37-2.87)	1.99(1.27-3.13) <sup>a</sup>
	Unemployed (including Peasant/ Maid/housewife/student)	296(59.1)		Ref
Household size				Ref
	<5	203(60.9)		
	≥5	239(65.5)	1.21(0.89-1.65)	1.37(1.02-1.85) <sup>a</sup>
Parity				
	0	77(71.3)	2.66(1.45-4.88)	2.74(1.54-4.87) <sup>a</sup>
	1-4	322(64.3)	1.92(1.22-3.04)	1.92(1.17-3.13) <sup>a</sup>
	5+	43(48.3)		Ref
Heard of folic acid				
	Yes	39(81.3)	2.66(1.26-5.60)	2.67(1.37-5.19) <sup>a</sup>
	No	403(62)		Ref
Heard of fortified flours				
	Yes	37(71.2)	1.47(0.79-2.73)	1.04(0.61-1.78)
	No	405(62.7)		Ref

**a:** Statistically significant

#### 4.9. Reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours

Frequently mentioned reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours were not knowing flour is fortified (44.3%) and unaffordability (24.5%). The least mentioned reasons was unavailability (1.1%) [See figure 2].



**Figure 2:** *Reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours (N=567)*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to assess uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA in Ifakara, Morogoro region. This is a reported uptake of any fortified wheat or maize flour product at least once in seven days prior the survey

The study found that uptake was 63.3%. Awareness of folic acid and existence of fortified flours was low. Every village had an access to fortified wheat flour. Factors found to influence uptake include being employed, parity, large household size and awareness of folic acid. The most common mentioned hindering reasons for uptake of fortified flours include not knowing that flour is fortified and unaffordability.

#### **5.1. Awareness of folic acid**

Awareness of folic acid was low (6.9%) far less compared to findings from other studies which found higher proportions. Studies in Europe, Nepal, New Zealand, USA, and Honduras found proportions of awareness of 70%, 40%, 98%, 84% and 46.4% respectively (25–29). This lack of awareness in the study area could be attributed by the fact that majority (71.9%) had only primary education or less.

Our study found that only five (10.1%) of WRA who were aware of folic acid heard that folic acid can prevent some birth defects. This is low compared to studies done in Europe, New Zealand and Honduras which found 25%, 28% and 62% respectively (25,27,31). This could be attributed by differences in levels of development and health-seeking behavior, which is low in developing countries than developed ones (46). Another reason could be due to high marketing of foods/goods/drugs in developed countries than the developing countries.

#### **5.2. Awareness of existence of fortified flours**

Awareness of existence of fortified flours was found low as well, but higher than a report from a Northern Ugandan study where no women was aware of existence of fortified foods (36). In a study among recently pregnant women in Australia awareness that folate was added to fortified

foods was 53% (35). The low level of awareness among WRA in Ifakara could be attributed by low community mobilization and sensitization and the fact that the fortification policy is only four years old since implementation started.

### **5.3. Uptake of folic acid fortified flours**

The uptake of folic acid fortified flours among WRA was 63.3% in general. This finding compares to a study done in Australia which found an uptake of folate added foods of 61% (47). Of this wheat flours uptake contributes a higher proportion than that of maize flour. This could be explained by the fact that all wheat flour brands available in the district were fortified and commonly used for breakfast while most households use maize flour milled by small-scale millers who most of them do not fortify.

### **5.4. Factors influencing uptake of folic acid fortified flours**

This study revealed that employed women were almost two times more likely to have taken up fortified flours than unemployed. This is contrary to a study done in Australia whereby employment was not a significant factor for uptake of folic acid fortified foods (14). Explanation of this phenomenon may be due to the low capacity of unemployed ones to buy foods than the other group or due to use of foods produced by themselves as majority are peasants. In addition, employed women are more likely to be educated than unemployed which may have an influence on awareness and uptake of fortified flours.

The same study in Australia found that those who were less educated were less likely to have taken up fortified foods than educated, contrary to our study, which found no significant association between fortified flours uptake and education (14).

Those who belonged to households of equal or more than five people were 37% more likely to have taken up folic acid fortified flours than those who were less than five. This is contrary to a usual understanding that small families may have more economic power to purchase foods. However, we found no relevant literature to support this finding.

Other independent factors influencing uptake of fortified flours among WRA in Ifakara include parity and awareness of folic acid. These findings had no relevant supporting literature.

### **5.5. Availability and price of fortified flours in Ifakara**

This study found that all villages involved in the study had access to fortified wheat flour and limited or no access to fortified maize flour. This could be attributed by the fact that most wheat flour is produced by owners of giant miller industries who have capacity to fortify and distribute/supply widely across Tanzania and adhere to availing food fortification policy. Maize flour production is mainly done by small scale millers who most of them lack the capacity to fortify due to low capital or incentives to do so, (8). Similar market price for fortified and non-fortified maize brands could be one of the barriers for local producers to adhere to fortification program.

### **5.6. Reasons hindering uptake of fortified flours**

Not knowing that flour is fortified was frequently named as an uptake hindering reason, this could be contributed by low or lack of community mobilization and sensitization campaigns. These findings had also no relevant supporting literature.

### **5.7. Study limitation(s)**

The study was dependent on information from study participants, therefore there may be recall bias. This was mitigated by collecting information on uptake of folic acid fortified flours within seven days prior interview.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION**

Uptake of fortified flours among WRA was high however, low for maize flour accompanied with low awareness of folic acid and fortified flours.

All nine villages involved had an access to fortified wheat flour and only one village had an access to fortified maize flour.

Employment (being employed), parity (<5 children), household size of 5 or more than five people and awareness of folic acid were independent influencing factors for folic acid fortified flours uptake.

Not knowing flour is fortified and unaffordability were commonly mentioned hindering reasons for uptake.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To increase uptake of fortified flours, institutions such as Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC) should increase awareness on the benefits of folic acid fortified flours among women and the general community
2. The Ifakara health department should educate about health benefits of using folic acid fortified flours through its routine health education sessions in clinics such as ANC, Adolescent health, OPD, and under fives clinics.
3. Local millers in Ifakara should be encouraged and given incentives (if possible) to increase production and availability in most parts; given the fact that there is market competition between millers who fortify and those who don't in terms of price of flour per kilogram.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1a: INFORMED CONSENT FORM- English Version**

#### **MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES - DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS.**

ID-NO \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Consent to participate in this study**

Greetings, My name is ..... from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam. We are carrying out a study regarding uptake of maize and wheat flours among women of reproductive age in Ifakara town council, Morogoro-Tanzania.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to collect information on uptake of maize and wheat flours among women of reproductive age in Ifakara town council, Morogoro. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have particular knowledge and experience that may be important to the study.

#### **What participation is involved**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be required to answer a series of questions that have been prepared for the study through interviewing in order to obtain the intended information regarding uptake of maize and wheat flours among women of reproductive age in Ifakara town council, Morogoro.

#### **Confidentiality**

I assure you that all the information collected from you will be kept confidential. Only people working in this research will have access to the information. We will compile a report which will contain responses from several women of reproductive age without any reference to any individual. We will not put your name or other identifying information on the records of the information you provide.

#### **Risks**

You will be asked questions about uptake of flours. Some questions could potentially make you feel uncomfortable. You may refuse to answer any particular question and stop the interview at

any time. We do not expect any harm to happen to you because of your participation in this study.

**Right to withdraw and alternatives**

Taking part in this study is completely your choice. If you choose not to participate in the study or if you decide to stop participating in the study you will not get any harm. You can stop participating in this study at any time, even if you have already given your consent. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from the study will not involve penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Benefits**

The information you provide will help to increase our understanding on uptake of maize and wheat flours among women of reproductive age in Ifakara, Morogoro. Communication of findings to policy makers in the council and ministry of health for improvement of uptake of maize and wheat flours will be made.

**In case of injury**

We do not anticipate that any harm will occur to you or your family as a result of participation in this study.

**Who to contact**

If you ever have questions about this study, you should contact the study Coordinator or the Principal Investigator **Dr Ipyana Frank Mwandelile-** Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences, P.O.Box 65001, Dar es Salaam) Tel: 0752659027/784226064. If you ever have questions about your rights as a participant, you may call Dr. Joyce Rose Masalu, Acting Chairperson of the Senate Research and Publications Committee, P.O. Box 65001, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 2150302-6, 2152489.

**Signature:**

Do you agree?

Participant agrees ..... Participant does not agree .....

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read the contents in this form. My questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant \_\_\_\_\_



Signature of research assistant \_\_\_\_\_

Date consentsigned\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1b: INFORMED CONSENT FORM- Swahili version****CHUO KIKUU CHA AFYA NA SAYANSI YA TIBA CHA MUHIMBILI****KURUGENZI YA UTAFITI NA UCHAPISHAJI**

FOMU YA RIDHAAID-NO \_\_\_\_\_

**Ridhaa ya kushiriki**

Hujambo? Ninaitwa..... Ninafanya kazi ya kutafiti hali ya matumizi ya unga wa mahindi na ngano kwa wanawake walio katika umri wa kuzaa kwenye halmashauri ya mji Ifakara, Morogoro.

**Madhumuni ya utafiti**

Utafiti huu unakusudia kuchunguza hali ya matumizi ya unga wa mahindi na ngano kwa wanawake walio katika umri wa kuzaa kwenye halmashauri ya mji Ifakara, Morogoro.

Unaombwa kushiriki kwenye utafiti huu kwa sababu unao ujuzi ama unafahamu mambo ambayo ni ya muhimu.

**Nini kina hitajika ili kushiriki**

Ili kushiriki katika utafiti huu inabidi kukubali na kujiunga kwa kujibu maswali toka kwenye dodoso kwa ajili ya utafiti huu.

**Usiri**

Ninakupakikishia kuwa taarifa zitakazo kusanywa kutoka kwako kupitia dodoso hili zitakua siri na hakuna mtu yeyote ambaye hafanyi kazi kwenye utafiti huu atakayeambiwa ulichosema. Itaandaliwa tarifa ya utafiti huu ambayo haitamtaja mshiriki yeyote. Jina lako wala utambulisho mwingine wowote hautawekwa kwenye tarifa unazozitoe. Taarifa zako zitaingizwa kwenye ngamizi kwa kutumia namba za utambulisho.

**Hatari**

Hakuna hatari yeyote itakayotokea kwako kutokana na ushiriki wako kwenye utafiti huu

**Haki ya kujittoa au vinginevyo**

Ushiriki katika utafiti huu ni hiari. Kutokushiriki au kujittoa kutoka kwenye utafiti hakutakuwa na adhabu yeyote na hutapoteza stahili zako endapo utaona ni vema kufanya hivyo.

**Faida**

Kama utakubali kushiriki kwenye utafiti huu itakua ni vema kwa vile utafiti huu una lengo la kubaini hali halisi ya matumizi ya unga wa mahindi na ngano kwa wanawake walio katika umri wa kuzaa kwenye halmashauri ya mji Ifakara, Morogoro.

**Endapo utapata madhara au la**

Hatutegemei utapata madhara yoyote kutokana na ushiriki wako katika utafiti huu.

**Nani wa kuwasiliana naye**

Kama kuna swali kuhusiana na utafiti huu itakubidi kuwasiliana na mtafiti mkuu Dr. Ipyana Frank Mwandelilewa Chuo Kikuu cha Afya na Sayansi ya Tiba Muhimbili, S.L.P. 65001 DSM. Simu (Tel: 0752659027 au 0784226064). Kama una maswali zaidi unaweza kuwasiliana na Dr. Joyce Rose Masalu, Makamu mwenyekiti wa seneti ya utafiti na kamati ya machapisho, S.L.P. 65001, Dar es Salaam. Tel (Simu): 2150302-6, 2152489.

Je, Umekubali?

Mshiriki amekubali..... Mshiriki hajakubali.....

Mimi.....nimesoma maelezo ya fomu hii, maswali yangu yamejibiwa na nimeridhika. Nakubali kushiriki katika utafiti huu.

Sahihi ya Mshiriki.....

Sahihi ya mtafiti msaidizi.....

Tarehe ya kutia sahihi ya kushiriki.....

**Appendix 1c: QUESTIONNAIRE - English version****UPTAKE OF FOLICACID FORTIFIED FLOURS AMONG WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE IN IFAKARA-MOROGORO, 2017.**

Questionnaire number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer ID \_\_\_\_\_

Ward \_\_\_\_\_ Village/hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ Cluster # \_\_\_\_\_

Now we are going to talk about folic acid and staple flours

**SECTION A: KNOWLEDGE ON FOLIC ACID/FORIFIED FLOURS**

1. Have you ever heard of folic acid?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No/Don't know/Not sure**  
skip to question number 4
- iii. Don't know/Not sure

2. If **Yes**, what have you heard, read, or seen about folic acid? (*Circle all that apply*)

- i. It can prevent some birth defects
- ii. It is a vitamin needed for cell growth
- iii. It is a type of acid found in some household products that should be avoided in pregnancy
- iv. It is good for pregnant women
- v. It needs to be taken before pregnancy
- vi. It needs to be taken during pregnancy
- vii. It is good for health
- viii. Don't remember
- ix. Others (specify).....

3. If **Yes** who gave you the information on folic acid? (*Circle all that apply*)

- i. Health care providers
- ii. Magazine/news papers/books
- iii. Radio/television/internet
- iv. Family/friend

4. Have you ever heard of fortified flours?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No** skip to question number 6

5. If **Yes**, who gave you the information on fortified flours?(*Circle all that apply*)

- i. Health care providers
- ii. Magazine/news papers/books
- iii. Radio/television/Internet
- iv. Family/friend

## **SECTION B: UPTAKE OF FORTIFIED FLOURS**

**Now we are going to talk about maize flour**

### **MAIZE FLOUR**

6. Does your household prepare foods using fortified maize flour?

- i. Always
- ii. Regularly
- iii. Sometimes
- iv. Rarely
- iv. No, never.....If **No** skip to question number 15
- v. Don't know/Not sure.....Skip to question number 11

7. Where does your household get fortified maize flour? *Circle all that apply*

- i. Purchase
- ii. Get it from relatives/ friends
- iii. Receive from food aid
- iv. Others (specify).....

8. If your household purchase maize flour what is the brand of maize flour you have ever purchased? *Circle all that apply*

- i. Kindole super sembe    ii. Mzalendo super sembe    iii. M gaya super sembe    iv. Super seki
- v. JC super sembe    vi. M.K. super sembe    vii. Master super sembe    viii. Mwangaza super sembe
- ix. MC Super sembe    x. P.M super sembe    xi. Super sembe    xii. Don't remember    xiii. Others (specify).....

9. In the past seven days have you eaten any of the fortified maize flour products (*like porridge and ugali/posho*)?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No** skip to question number 16

10. If Yes, How many days have you eaten any of the fortified maize flour products in the last seven days? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you currently have any maize flour in your household?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No/Don't** know skip to question number 17
- iii. Don't know

12. If **Yes**, Could you show me the original package? *Observe on fortification logo*

- i. Logo present
- ii. Logo absent

13. If **Yes** and packed in original package, *Observe on brand name*

- i. Kindole super sembe    ii. Mzalendo super sembe    iii. Mgaya super sembe    iv. Super seki  
 v. JC super sembe    vi. M.K. super sembe    vii. Master super sembe    viii. Mwangaza super  
 sembe    ix. MC Super sembe    x. P.M super sembe    xi. Super sembe    xii. Others  
 (specify).....(**Go to question 17**)

14. If not packed in original package, *Ask what was/is the brand of the flour?*

- i. Kindole super sembe    ii. Mzalendo super sembe    iii. Mgaya super sembe    iv. Super seki    v.  
 JC super sembe    vi. M.K. super sembe    vii. Master super sembe    viii. Mwangaza super sembe  
 ix. MC Super sembe    x. P.M super sembe    xi. Super sembe    xii. Don't remember    xiii. Others  
 (specify).....(**Go to question 17**)

15. What are the reasons for not preparing food using fortified maize flour in your household?

*Circle all that apply*

- i. Not available  
 ii. Expensive  
 iii. We don't prefer fortified maize flour  
 iv. We buy readymade products  
 v. We prepare flour at home/local mills  
 vi. Buy unknowingly/don't know flour is fortified  
 vii. Others (specify).....

16. What are the reasons for not eating fortified maize flour products in the last seven days?

- i. Not available  
 ii. Expensive  
 iii. I/we don't prefer fortified maize flour  
 iv. I/we bought readymade products  
 v. Prepared flour at home/local mills  
 vi. Out of stock  
 vii. Others (specify).....

**WHEAT FLOUR**

17. Does your household prepare foods using wheat flour?

- i. Always
- ii. Regularly
- iii. Sometimes
- iv. Rarely
- v. No, never.....If **No** skip to question number 21
- vi. Don't know/remember.....**Go to question 22**

18. Where does your household get wheat flour? *Circle all that apply*

- i. Purchase
- ii. Get it from relatives/ friends
- iii. Receive from food aid
- iv. Others (specify).....

19. If your household purchase wheat flour what is the brand of wheat flour you have ever purchased? *Circle all that apply*

- i. Azania ii. Pembe iii. Maisha iv. Safi v. Poa vi. Taifa vii. Azam viii. Nyati
- ix. Jumbo x. Sunkist xi. Don't know/remember xii. Others  
(specify).....**Go to question 22**

20. What are the reasons for not preparing food using wheat flour? *Circle all that apply*

- i. Not available
- ii. Expensive
- iii. We don't prefer fortified wheat flour
- iv. We buy readymade products
- v. Buy unknowingly/don't know flour is fortified
- vi. Others (specify).....



21. In the past seven days have you eaten any of the wheat flour products?(*like bread, buns, chapatti, cake etc*)

- i. Yes
- ii. No..... If **No** skip to question number 24

22. If Yes, How many days have you eaten any of the wheat flour products in the last seven days?\_\_\_\_\_ **Go to question 24.**

23. What are the reasons for not eating wheat flour products in the last seven days?

- i. Not available
- ii. Expensive
- iii. I/we don't prefer fortified wheat flour
- iv. I/we bought readymade products
- v. Out of stock
- vi. Others (specify).....

24. Do you currently have any wheat flour in your household?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No/Don't** know skip to question number 28
- iii. Don't know

25. If **Yes**, Could you show me the original package? *Observe on fortification logo*

- i. Logo present
- ii. Logo absent

26. If **Yes** and packed in original package, *Observe on brand name*

- i. Azania ii. Pembe iii. Maisha iv. Safi v. Poa vi. Taifa vii. Azam viii. Nyati
- ix. Jumbo x. Sunkist xi. Others (specify).....

27. If not packed in original package, *Ask what was/is the brand of the flour?*

- i. Azania ii. Pembe iii. Maisha iv. Safi v. Poa vi. Taifa vii. Azam viii. Nyati  
ix. Jumbo x. Sunkist xi. Don't remember xii. Others (specify).....

**Go to question 28**

**SECTION C: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

28. How old are you now?..... (Years)

29. What is the maximum level of education you attained? *Circle one response*

- i. Informal/illiterate
- ii. Primary school
- iii. Secondary and high school
- iv. Diploma
- v. University

30. What do you do to earn a living? *Circle one response*

- i. Student
- ii. Peasant
- iii. employee
- iv. Self employed/business
- v. Unemployed/Housewife/maid

31. What is your household estimated maximum monthly income?.....Tshs

32. What is your current marital status? *Circle one response*

- i. Never married
- ii. Married
- iii. Cohabiting
- iv. Divorced/separated
- v. Widowed

33. How many are you in your household, including you?.....

34. What is your relationship with the head of household?

- i. I am the head of household
- ii. I am the wife/ partner of head of household
- iii. I am a relative/child of head of household
- iv. I am a house girl/non-relative

35. Have you ever given birth to a child/children?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No (END HERE)**

36. How many times have you given birth to children including (if any) those who died while seven months pregnant or more?.....

**37. Now we are going to specifically talk about your LAST pregnancy.**

During your last pregnancy did you attend at antenatal clinic?

- i. Yes
- ii. No.....If **No** skip to question number 40

38. If Yes, in what month of pregnancy did you start attending antenatal clinic? \_\_\_\_\_

39. How many times did you attend at antenatal clinic? \_\_\_\_\_

40. Did you plan your latest pregnancy with a health care provider?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

**END**

Thank you for your participation



3. Je ni nani aliyekupa tarifa kuhusu folic acid?(*Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja*)

- i. Wahudumu wa afya
- ii. Magazeti/vitabu
- iii. Redio/televisheni/internet
- iv. Ndugu/rafikiyangu

4. Je umekwisha wahi kusikia kuhusu unga uliongezewa virutubisho?

- i. Ndiyoi. Hapana(Kama **Hapana** nenda swali la 6)

5. Je ni nani aliyekupa taarifa kuhusu unga ulio ongezewa virutubisho?

- i. Wahudumu wa afya
- ii. Magazeti/vitabu
- iii. Redio/televisheni/internet
- iv. Ndugu/rafikiyangu

## **SECTION B: ULAJI WA VYAKULA VITOKANAVYO NA UNGA WENYE VIRUTUBISHO**

### **UNGA WA MAHINDI**

6. Je katika nyumba yenu mnapikachakula kwa kutumia unga wa mahindi ulio ongezewa virutubisho?

- i. Ndiyo mara zote
- ii. Ndiyo mara kwa mara
- iii. Ndiyo mara chache
- iv. Mara chache sana

v. Hapana, hatujawahi..... Kama **Hapana** nenda swali la 15

vi. Sifahamu/sikumbuki.....Kama **Sifahamu/sikumbuki** nenda swali la 11

7. Je mnaupata wapi unga wa mahindi uliongezewa virutubisho? (*Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja*)

- i. Tunanunua
- ii. Tunapewa na ndugu/rafiki
- iii. Tunapewa msaada
- iv. Mengineyo (taja).....

8. Kama mnanunua unga wa mahindi je ni nembo/kampuni yenye jina gani mmeshawahi kununua? (*Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja*)

- i. Kindole super sembe    ii. Mzalendo super sembe    iii. Mgaya super sembe    iv. Super seki  
v. JC super sembe    vi. M.K. super sembe    vii. Master super sembe    viii. Mwangaza super sembe  
ix. MC Super sembe    x. P.M super sembe    xi. Super sembe    xii. Sijui/sikumbuki  
xiii. Mengineyo (taja).....

9. Je katika siku saba zilizopita umewahi kutumia vyakula vyovyote vitokanavyo na unga wa mahindi ulioongezewa virutubisho? (*kama vile uji, ugali/posho n.k*)

- i. Ndiyo                    ii. Hapana                    (Kama **Hapana** nenda swali la 16)

10. Kama ndiyo, Je ni siku ngapi za wiki umetumia vyakula vitokanavyo na unga wa mahindi uliongezewa virutubisho? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Je kwa sasa unao unga wa mahindi uliongezewa virutubisho?

- i. Ndiyo                    ii. Hapana                    (Kama **Hapana** nenda swali la 17)

12. Kama **Ndiyo** na upo kwenye mfuko/kifungashio cha asili, *Angalia nembo ya unga huo.*

- i. Nembo ipo            ii. Nembo haipo

13. Kama **Ndiyo** na upo kwenye mfuko/kifungashio cha asili, *Angalia jina la kibiashara la unga huo (Zungushia jibu moja)*

- i. Kindole super sembe    ii. Mzalendo super sembe    iii. Mgaya super sembe    iv. Super seki  
v. JC super sembe    vi. M.K. super sembe    vii. Master super sembe  
viii. Mwangaza super sembe    ix. MC Super sembe    x. P.M super sembe    xi. Super sembe  
xii. Mengineyo (taja)..... (*Nenda swali la 17*)

14. Kama haupo kwenye mfuko/kifungashio cha asili, **Muulize jina la kibiashara la unga huo** (**Zungushia jibu moja**)

- i. Kindole super sembe      ii. Mzalendo super sembe      iii. Mgaya super sembe      iv. Super sekiv. JC super sembe      vi. M.K. super sembe      vii. Master super sembe      viii. Mwangaza super sembe      ix. MC Super sembe      x. P.M super sembe      xi. Super sembe      xii. Sikumbuki      xiii. Mengineyo (taja)..... (**Nenda swali la 17**)

15. Je ni sababu gani zinazofanya msitumie unga wa mahindi ulioongezewa virutubisho kupika? (**Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja**)

- i. Haupatikani      ii. Ni gharama      iii. Hatupendelei kutumia unga wa mahindi ulioongezewa virutubisho      iv. Tunanunua chakula kilicho pikwa      v. Tunasaga wenyewe/mashineni
- vi. Hatujui kama unga una virutubisho/tunanunua bila kujua      vii. Mengineyo (taja)..... (**Nenda swali la 17**)

16. Je ni sababu gani zilizofanya usitumie vyakula vitokanavyo na unga wa mahindi ulioongezewa virutubisho siku saba zilizopita? (**Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja**)

- i. Haupatikani      ii. Nigharama      iii. Si/hatupendelei kutumia unga wa mahindi ulioongezewa virutubisho      iv. Ni/tulinunua chakula kilicho pikwa      v. Tulisaga wenyewe/mashineni      vi. Umekwisha      vii. Mengineyo (taja).....

## **UNGA WA NGANO**

17. Je katika nyumba yenu mnapika chakula kwa kutumia unga wa ngano?

- i. Ndiyo mara zote      ii. Ndiyo mara kwa mara      iii. Ndiyo mara chache      iv. Ndiyo Maracha chache sanav. Hapana, hatujawahi..... Kama **Hapana** nenda swali la 21

vi. Sifahamu/sikumbuki..... Kama **Sifahamu/sikumbuki** nenda swali la 22

18. Je mnaupata wapi unga wa ngano? (*Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja*)

- i. Tunanunua    ii. Tunapewa na ndugu/rafiki    iii. Tunapewa msaada  
iv. Mengineyo (taja).....

19. Kama mnanunua unga wa ngano je ni nembo/kampuni yenye jina gani mmeshawahi kununua? (*Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja*)

- i. Azania    ii. Pembe    iii. Maisha    iv. Safi    v. Poa    vi. Taifa    vii. Azam    viii. Nyati  
ix. Jumbo    x. Sunkist    xi. Sijui/kumbuki    xii. Mengineyo  
(taja).....**Nenda swali la 22**

20. Je ni sababu gani zinazo fanya msitumie unga wa ngano kupika? (*Zungushia jibu zaidi yamoja*)

- i. Haupatikani    ii. Ni gharama    iii. Hatupendelei kutumia unga wa ngano  
iv. Tunanunua chakula kilichopikwa    v. Hatujui kama unga una virutubisho/tunanunua bila kujua  
vi. Mengineyo (taja).....

21. Je katika siku saba zilizopita umewahi kutumia vyakula vyovyote vitokanavyo na unga wa ngano? (*kamavile mkate, andazi, chapati, keki n.k*)

- i. Ndiyo    ii. Hapana    Kama **Hapana** nenda swali la la 23

22. Kama ndiyo, Je ni siku ngapi za wiki umetumia vyakula vitokanavyo na unga wa ngano? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Je ni sababu gani zilizofanya usitumie vyakula vitokanavyo na unga wa ngano siku saba zilizopita? (*Zungushia jibu zaidi ya moja*)

- i. Haupatikani    ii. Ni gharama    iii. Si/hatupendelei kutumia unga wa ngano  
iv. Ni/tulinunua chakula kilichopikwa    v. Umekwisha  
vi. Mengineyo (taja).....





31. Je kwa makadirio mapato ya kaya yenu ni kiasi gani kwa mwezi?\_\_\_\_\_Tshs

32. Hali yako ya ndoa ni ipi kwa sasa? (*Zungushia jibu moja*)

- i. Sijawahi kuolewa ii. Nimeolewa iii. Ninaishi na bwana iv. Mtalaka/Tumetengana  
v. Mjane

33. Je kwa ujumla mko wangapi katika kaya yenu pamoja na wewe?\_\_\_\_\_

34. Je una uhusiano gani na mkuu wa kaya?

- i. Mimi ndiye mkuu wa kaya ii. Mkewe/mwenza iii. Ndugu yake/mtoto iv. Mtumishi  
wa ndani/ siyo ndugu

35. Je umewahi kuzaa mtoto/watoto?

- i. Ndiyo ii. Hapana Kama Hapana (Ishia hapa)

36. Je umezaa watoto wangapi kwa ujumla ukihesabu(kama ilitokea) na watoto waliokufa ukiwa na mimba ya miezi saba au zaidi?\_\_\_\_\_

***Sasa tutazungumzia kuhusu ujauzito wako wa mwisho***

37. Ulipokuwa mjamzito kwa mara ya mwisho je ulihudhuria kliniki?

- i. Ndiyo ii. Hapana Kama Hapana (Nendaswali la 40)

38. Je ulianza kuhudhuria kliniki ukiwa na umri gani wa ujauzito?\_\_\_\_\_

39. Je kwa ujumla ulihudhuria kliniki mara ngapi? \_\_\_\_\_

40. Je ulipanga kuwa na ujauzito huo kwa ushauri wa mhudumu wa afya?

- i. Ndiyo ii. Hapana

## **MWISHO**

Ahsante kwa kushiriki

**Appendix 1e: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

**OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:**

**Cluster No.....**

*STREET* \_\_\_\_\_

SHOP	FORTIFIED FLOURS	Yes	No	Brand	Fortification LOGO (V)	Price/kg
1	Wheat					
	Maize					
2	Wheat					
	Maize					
3	Wheat					
	Maize					



## sAppendix 1g: Ethical clearance

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Ref No: MU/PGS/SAEC/Val XVI/ 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2016

Mr. Ipyana Frank Mwandilele  
MSc. Applied Epidemiology  
MUHAS

**RE: APPROVAL OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR A STUDY TITLED: "UPTAKE OF FOLIO ACID FORTIFIED FLOURS AMONG WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE IN IFAKARA-MOROGORO 2016"**

Reference is made to the above heading.

I am pleased to inform you that, the Chairman has, on behalf of the Senate, approved ethical clearance for the above-mentioned study. Hence you may proceed with the planned study.

The ethical clearance is valid for one year only, from 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2016 to 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017. In case you do not complete data analysis and dissertation report writing by 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 you will have to apply for renewal of ethical clearance prior to the expiry date.

  
Prof. Andrew B. Pembe  
**DIRECTOR OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

cc: Director of Research and Publications  
cc: Dean, School of Public Health and Social Sciences