BACKGROUND:
- Immunization is the most cost-effective public health intervention, providing children with protection from vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs). Vaccines prevent debilitating illness and disability, and save millions of lives every year. Despite the overall success of immunization programs to date, it is estimated that almost 11 million children under 5 years of age die each year globally from VPDs. Especially in developing countries; immunization achievement is still far from the universal target which is less than 95% coverage rate, leading to preventable mortality.
- Equity in access to vaccination remains a challenge and coverage rates vary greatly among countries. Even within countries, where there is greater potential for consistent resource allocation, coverage is uneven. In developing countries that have a poorly functioning health system, it is difficult to ensure equity of access to immunization and, as a result, there may be a high degree of variability in immunization coverage.
- Though currently, Ethiopia has witnessed good improvement in immunization coverage due to the health extension program which deployed more than 30,000 health extension workers at kebele level and the construction of health posts closer to the community.

STUDY OBJECTIVE:
-To assess immunization service availability and readiness in PHCUs in pastoral and semi-pastoral regions of CORE Group Polio Project (CGPP) Ethiopia implementing districts.

METHODS:
- Facility-based cross-sectional survey was conducted between 14-23 August 2016 in 860 PHCUs (all health centers in CGPP implementation areas and three randomly selected HPs in areas where the HC catchment has more than three HPs under each HC catchment area) in 85 CGPP implementation districts.
- Observation checklists were filled by trained data collectors for all items, as shown in figure below.

RESULTS:
-A total of 860 PHCUs (227 (26.3%) health centers (HCs) and 633 (73.7%) health posts (HPs) were observed in 85 CGPP implementation districts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:
- All PHCUs are expected to provide routine immunization service daily at the facility in order to avoid immunization missed opportunities. However, this study showed that only 36.2% of HCs and 11.7% of HPs were observed providing the service during the survey period. This may be due to the variation in the observation time and the health facilities’ vaccination schedules.
- The majority of the PHCUs were not observed providing immunization service at the facility on the day of the assessment. This may be due to the unavailability of functional refrigerators to store vaccines in the PHCUs (especially the HPs), resulting in low antigen availability during the data collection period.
- Equip all PHCUs, especially HPs, with functional refrigerators and provide regular maintenance, Make available all immunization antigens and schedule immunization service at the facility on the day of the assessment.

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