

Amanda Zongrone

Maternal Capacity and Child Health Outcomes: Insights from Bangladesh

My research will involve the investigation of barriers to the uptake of proper infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices using the lens of “maternal capacity.” The term “maternal capacity” refers to the concept that a mother’s behavior transforms into child health outcomes and that mothers have varying “capacity” to carry out recommended practices due to multiple influences. The overall goal of this research is to understand how maternal capacity explains variability in child health. Understanding a mother’s capacity to carry out recommended IYCF practices as well as understanding the factors that underlie this capacity has implications for interventions that aim to improve child health. This research will provide a greater understanding of how resources are translated in an implementation pathway leading to changes in child health. It is essential to further our understanding of this in order to improve the targeting of health interventions and thus improve health outcomes. This will be conducted through the use of baseline survey data that has already been collected through the “Alive and Thrive” project (A&T) and through qualitative interviews and observations that I will coordinate in Bangladesh.

The first portion of this research will be conducted in selected field sites of the “Alive and Thrive” project in Bangladesh from May 2011-August 2011.

The collaboration with the staff of the A&T project has already been established. The staff members are aware of the research I am proposing to conduct for my dissertation and have agreed to provide me with access to their baseline survey data, as well as access to their field sites and participants to conduct qualitative interviews.