

Maternal Awareness for Low-Literate Expecting Parents via Voice-Based Telephone Services



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Abstract

This paper describes a speech-based service designed to improve maternal health awareness among expecting parents in Pakistan. The platform is being used to tackle the problem of high neonatal, infant, and maternal mortality in Pakistan which have either increased or remained stagnant in the recent past. The concept was designed based on observations that our target audience is interested in information about cost saving as well as social connectivity. We propose Suno Abbu, an IVR-based information service for low-literate, expecting parents with the aim of increasing awareness and birth preparedness to induce behavior change. Adapting to the local culture where mothers are often not the decision makers in the family structure, we plan to target expecting fathers as the primary audience of Suno Abbu. This proposal has received seed funding, and we present our methodology for the pilot in this manuscript.

Research Objectives

Short-term

1. To engage fathers via content related to costs
2. To improve maternal health literacy and birth preparedness
3. To enhance uptake of the service among target users

Long-term

1. To promote healthy behaviors among expecting parents
2. To decrease neonatal, infant, and maternal mortality in Pakistan

Methodology and Service Design

We propose to develop and deploy Suno Abbu, an IVR service targeting low-literate expecting fathers, that is engaging, interactive and informational.

SUNO
ABBU 

1

DOCTOR'S TIPS

The doctor's tips will be presented in order of importance. These will be in the form of a list of standard advice that is given to women during pregnancy, modified in tone and script for a primarily male audience. The service will take on the persona of Dr. Saba, a female gynecologist who provides the information.

2

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The cost-benefit analysis will provide an estimated breakdown of major expenses parents should expect at the time of delivery. This will be compared to the potential costs that could arise if the standard recommendations are not followed.

3

PARENTS' STORIES

Parents' stories allow parents to relate their experiences regarding child birth and pregnancy on a public forum. To prevent misinformation and rumors, we intend to carefully moderate this branch of Suno Abbu. We expect, based on previous research, that parents are more likely to be influenced by stories of others like themselves.

4

USER FEEDBACK

Feedback is an option that allows users to give their feedback and suggestions related to Suno Abbu. It provides us with useful information on how to improve the service.



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