

**TITLE: HEALTH WORKER AND CAREGIVER INTERACTION DURING CHILD
VACCINATION
SESSIONS AT HEALTH FACILITIES IN SOMALI REGION OF ETHIOPIA:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT (upto 300 words)

Somali Region is one of the largest regions in Ethiopia which has performed persistently low with immunization coverage. Communication during vaccination sessions at health facilities is a key factor that influence caregiver's decision to bring back their children for vaccination. The objective of this study was to assess health worker and caregiver interaction during immunization sessions and identify communication gaps at health facilities in the Somali region. This was a cross-sectional qualitative study. The study was carried out using in-depth interviews with health workers responsible for vaccination, observation of vaccinator and caregiver interaction during immunization sessions, and exit interview of caregivers who brought their children for vaccination or whose child was vaccinated at the health facility. Health workers responsible for vaccination in twelve health facilities from the central and remote parts of the region were interviewed. A total of 63 vaccination sessions in the 12 health facilities were observed and caregivers were interviewed on exit. Most caregivers described the vaccinators as friendly and supportive. Some mothers who did not bring the immunization card with them were returned without the child getting the service. The return date for vaccination was written on child immunization card in most cases.

Most caregivers do not identify vaccines by name or purpose; however, they all want their children to get vaccines as recommended by health workers. Health workers do not communicate all information required for continued use of immunization services at health facilities during vaccination sessions. In the Somali region, caregiver communication will need to be improved through training of health workers on immunization basics and effective communication skills.