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Perceptions And Experiences Of Prospective Brides And Grooms And Ora Officers Regarding The Use Of "Suscatinting" Application

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ABSTRACT

Background: Efforts to prevent stunting should begin in the preconception stage, especially among prospective married couples. The SusCatinTing (Premarital Course for Stunting Prevention) application is a digital-based intervention designed to improve the knowledge and experiences of prospective couples, especially regarding the First 1,000 Days of Life. It offers educational content of healthy pregnancies, maternal nutrition, and the concept of a harmonious family. To ensure inclusivity, the application features audio-based learning for users with visual impairments or limited literacy, alongside a Google Maps integration to help locate the nearest Office of Religious Affairs (ORA). This study aims to explore the perceptions, experiences of prospective brides and grooms in using the SusCatinTing application.
Method: This study used a qualitative design to understand the phenomenon perception and experience. The research stages are systematically structured, starting with identifying informants, data collection, analysis, and drawing conclusions. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and observations. Informants were selected purposively according to predetermined criteria so that the obtained can support the achievement of the research objectives. Each ORA was represented by one couple as the main informants. Supporting informants consisted of one marriage registrar, one marriage registration officer, and one Head of ORA from each selected office.
Result: Almost all prospective couples participated in scheduled premarital guidance sessions conducted by the ORA. While many had heard of stunting previously, few were aware of it through the ORA. Most respondents were unfamiliar with SusCatinTing until they saw promotional posters during their marriage registration process. All respondents reported the app to be user-friendly, though it requires an internet connection.
Conclusion: The findings suggest that the SusCatinTing application is a highly effective digital tool. It serves as a practical, innovative model for providing essential stunting prevention education to couples entering marriage.

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government aims to reduce the stunting prevalence to 14.2% by 2029, as mandated by National Medium-Term Development Plan. Achieving this target requires a multi-sectoral approach, necessitating coordinated strategies between the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries. A key component of this strategy involves ensuring that 90% of couples of childbearing ages receive health screenings as part of the premarital services for prospective brides and grooms. Providing these individuals with comprehensive information regarding reproductive health and related sexual health issues is critical at this stage (Andriano, 2019).

Stunting is still a public health issue in Indonesia that requires preventive efforts from the pre-conception period, especially for prospective brides and grooms. Under the Regulation of Director General of Islamic Community Guidance No. 373 of 2017, the Ministry of Religious Affairs mandates that all prospective couples participate in premarital guidance. Various reproductive health and stunting prevention education programs have been implemented through outreach, counseling, and print media. However, the implementation of education for prospective brides and grooms in the field still faces several limitations, such as poor material delivery, limited counseling time, and the less-than-optimal use of interactive and sustainable digital media. Research by Simanjuntak & Wahyudi (2021) suggests that while educational tools like pocketbooks are more effective than leaflets in improving the knowledge of prospective brides, current government programs still rely heavily on traditional media – such as modules, leaflets, and pamphlets. Research by Rokicki et al. (2017) found that text messaging-based programs effectively increased adolescents' reproductive health knowledge. This finding is supported by Medinawati et al. (2022), who also showed that the use of the educational application "Acenting Seni" improved the knowledge and attitudes of women of childbearing age regarding stunting prevention.

However, previous research still has several limitations. Most digital interventions focus solely on increasing knowledge without comprehensively integrating aspects of attitude and behavior change. Furthermore, the media used are generally one-way, not yet integrated with the service needs of prospective brides and grooms, and do not specifically combine reproductive health education, premarital preparation, and stunting prevention within a single, systematic digital platform. Another research gap is the limited number of studies evaluating the use of digital educational applications for prospective brides and grooms with an integrated promotive and preventive approach. In addition, there is limited research examining the effectiveness of digital applications in supporting marriage guidance programs integrated with preconception health services and efforts to accelerate stunting reduction. Moreover, there are no studies using qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of prospective brides and grooms. Thus, a research gap remains in the limited development and evaluation of digital applications specifically designed for prospective brides and grooms, with an integrated educational approach to premarital health and stunting prevention that can simultaneously influence knowledge, attitudes, and health behavior.

In practice, these methods are often suboptimal due to their lack of portability and limited engagement, highlighting an urgent need for innovative, Android-based Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to deliver health education online. Boedt, T. (2025) found that the actual use of a preconception lifestyle application among couples undergoing IVF was low. To increase usage and engagement with such applications, future studies should focus on personalization and interaction with partners, healthcare providers, and other patient data systems. As noted by Hartini, L. et al. (2024), Mobile Health (mHealth) applications offer significant potential as effective interventions for public health improvement. However, the success of such platforms depends not only on technological availability but also on the users' perceptions and experiences during interaction. According to Smith et al. (2024), the mobile

health application Pregnant Faster encourages women to enhance preconception preparation and to utilize appropriate healthcare services.

Perinatal women are increasingly turning to digital media for maternal health information; however, concerns regarding the quality of this information persist. Understanding their perceptions of information quality is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of information services (Li et al., 2025). Meanwhile, according to Zhao, Y., Ni, Q., & Zhou, R. (2015), the use of the engaging in health-related Internet use is a proactive behavior rather than a reactive behavior, suggesting that TAM dimensions have a significant mediating role in Internet health management.

Current challenges are further compounded by the fact that premarital education is often limited to counseling sessions conducted by the Office of Religious Affairs (ORA) officers, who may lack specialized knowledge regarding stunting. Furthermore, reliance on conventional lecture-based methods often leads to low health literacy among couples. The acceptance of the SusCatinTing application is therefore contingent upon user perceptions—specifically its perceived ease of use, utility, and the perceived credibility of its content. Factors such as user comfort, feature clarity, and the relevance of the educational material are vital to sustaining engagement. If the application is perceived as cumbersome or irrelevant, its impact will remain minimal. According to Rambe (2024), failing to strengthen such "upstream" policies will perpetuate the cycle of stunting and hinder national targets. By integrating this digital tool, marriage registrars can serve as essential intermediaries in delivering critical health education at the foundational stage of family formation.

The urgency of premarital preparation for prospective couples serves a critical role in preventing stunting, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life. Recognizing this, the researchers developed "SusCatinTing," an innovative Android-based application. This digital tool integrates religious guidance, reproductive health education, and nutritional strategies for stunting prevention. It also features a QR code system enabling couples to obtain certification prior to marriage, aiming to enhance both the perce

Options and practical experiences of prospective brides and grooms. This study seeks to evaluate how users perceive and interact with the SusCatinTing platform.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of prospective brides and grooms and KUA officers regarding the use of the “SusCatinTing” application. Meanwhile according to Heryana, A. (2018), the qualitative approach was chosen because it can comprehensively explore participants’ meanings, experiences, and perspectives regarding the use of the application as a medium for premarital health education and stunting prevention.

This study was conducted across five Offices of Religious Affairs (ORAs) in Kepahiang Regency. These locations were selected from a total of eight available ORAs using a purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because the researcher deliberately selected participants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2018). Participants were included because they were considered to have relevant perceptions and experiences related to the use of the SusCatinTing application. The number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation; that is, data collection was stopped when additional interviews no longer yielded information relevant to the research focus.

Data were gathered from a diverse group of participants: primary informants, one prospective couple from each selected ORA; and supporting informants, one marriage registrar,

one registration officer, and one Head of ORA from each office. The researcher utilized data triangulation to ensure validity. Demographic data – including age, education, and occupation – were collected via structured interviews. This was followed by in-depth interviews focusing on several key thematic areas, such as socialization of premarital guidance, user perceptions of stunting, perceptions and user experiences regarding the SusCatinTing application, perceived utility of the application for the informants. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was convened at the Ministry of Religious Affairs office in Kepahiang Regency, involving 15 supporting informants. The primary objective of this FGD was to validate the data provided by the couples concerning the established interview themes.

All audio recordings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were coded after the interview data had been transcribed. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis by repeatedly reading the transcripts to gain an overall understanding of the content. Next, open coding was conducted by assigning codes to statements related to the research focus. Codes with similar meanings were then grouped into categories, which were subsequently developed into themes describing participants' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of the SusCatinTing application. The resulting themes were organized into narrative findings and supported by direct participant quotations.

The validity of the data in this study was ensured using criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through source triangulation and in-depth interviews with key informants. Transferability was achieved by providing a detailed description of the research context. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of the entire research process, while confirmability was ensured by grounding the interpretation of the findings in the data and direct participant quotations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has been approved by the Researcher Ethics Committee at the Bengkulu Public Health Polytechnic under the Ministry of Health, with reference number KEPK.BKL/105/03/2024, dated March 19, 2024.

Research Finding

1. Characteristics of the Informant

This study utilized in-depth interviews with prospective couples to explore their engagement with premarital programs and the SusCatinTing application. The findings indicate that nearly all participants attended the scheduled premarital guidance sessions at their respective Offices of Religious Affairs. The characteristics of the primary and supporting informants are detailed in Table 1 and summarized below:

Table 1. Characteristic of Main Informant

Informant Code	Age	Education	Job
A1	22	SLTA	Private-sector employee
A2	23	SLTA	Self-employed worker
A3	25	S1	Government contract employee
A4	24	S1	Non-permanent employee
A5	26	SLTA	Private-sector employee
A6	24	SLTA	Self-employed worker
A7	26	SLTA	Self-employed worker
A8	25	SLTA	Non-permanent employee
A9	21	SLTP	Private-sector employee
A10	20	SLTP	Private-sector employee

Table 2. Characteristic of Supported Informant

Informant Code	Age	Education	Job
B1	45	S2	Marriage registrars
B2	54	S2	Marriage registrars
B3	47	S1	Marriage registrars
B4	42	S1	Marriage registrars
B5	40	S1	Marriage registrars
C1	38	S1	Registration officers
C2	40	S1	Registration officers
C3	40	S1	Registration officers
C4	39	S1	Registration officers
C5	45	S1	Registration officers
D1	47	S1	ORA heads
D2	41	S2	ORA heads
D3	49	S1	ORA heads
D4	51	S1	ORA heads
D5	55	S1	ORA heads

These range in age from 38 to 55 years. All held at least a Bachelor's degree in Religion, fulfilling the professional criteria for their respective roles. These characteristics indicate that the supporting informants have work experience, professional capacity, and a fairly good understanding regarding the implementation of marriage guidance and education for prospective brides and grooms

2. Outreach on Marriage Counselling at the ORA

Data gathered from the in-depth interviews reveal a high level of compliance regarding premarital orientation. Most couples adhered strictly to the timetables established by the ORA. The following section outlines the socialization process and the specific feedback provided by both the couples and ORA officials regarding the integration of the SusCatinTing application into these sessions:

"…. I attended the premarital guidance at the ORA because we were contacted by them yesterday" (Informant A3)

"…….. I haven't attended the guidance yet, perhaps because our wedding is not until next month, so it's still a while away.." (Informant A5)

"…. Yes, when we registered at the ORA, they gave us information and motivated us to make sure we could attend the session.." (Informant A6, A9)

This is in line with the findings of the FGD with marriage officiants, marriage registration officers, and heads of religious affairs offices, as follows:

"……. Every couple that registers their marriage at the ORA is given a schedule to attend our premarital guidance or counselling session.." (Informant B1,B4)

" ..... At the time of registration, we provide the schedule for the guidance sessions that must be completed before the wedding takes place..." (Informant C2, C5)

" ..... Premarital guidance is usually conducted about one week before the wedding, generally through a lecture delivered by the registrar.." (Informant D3).

3. Prospective Couples' Perceptions of Stunting

The findings from the primary interviews suggest that while almost all respondents had heard of the term "stunting," this knowledge was generally acquired through external channels rather than the ORA. The following excerpts illustrate their understanding:

"....Regarding stunting, I have heard of it; it's about the health and nutrition of pregnant women, right?.."(informant A7)

"....I have heard about it and seen posters; it's about planning to prevent malnutrition. (informant A3, A4)

These insights were further validated by the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the supporting informants:

"..... Indeed, we have never actually provided material specifically on stunting to the couples registering here at the ORA.." (informant B2, C2, C4)

"..... I have read about it on the Ministry of Religious Affairs website, but I don't feel competent enough to explain it to the prospective couples...." (informant B3, D2)

4. Prospective Brides and Grooms' Perceptions of the SusCatinTing Application

The in-depth interviews with primary informants revealed that all prospective couples were initially unfamiliar with the SusCatinTing application. However, many reported noticing promotional posters at the registration desks during their marriage application process. Their perceptions are reflected in the following statements:

"....I only heard about SusCatinTing yesterday. We were introduced to the application, but we haven't actually used it yet... (Informant A8, A9)

"... Thank God, I've already downloaded the app. It was introduced to us by the ORA officer during our premarital guidance session yesterday... (Informant A2)

"... As I understand it, SusCatinTing explains pregnancy preparation and maternal health to prevent stunting...." (informant A10)

" .....Yes, I'm aware of it because I saw the poster on the registration desk when I went to sign up for the marriage. I've already downloaded the app and was instructed to use it until I received the certificate..." (informant A7)

These findings were corroborated by the FGD with supporting informants**:**

"..... I had heard of SusCatinTing before the researchers arrived as I read about it on the Bengkulu Province Ministry of Religious Affairs website. Now, we've tried using it and we suggest that couples download it, even though we are still learning the details ourselves..." (informant B5, D4)

".....I've heard of it, but we don't quite understand how to operate it yet. Our goal is to eventually have every couple download the app as soon as they register their marriage…" (informant C3, D4)

5. User Experiences with the SusCatinTing Application

Data from the in-depth interviews suggest that nearly all prospective couples found the application easy to navigate, provided they had stable internet access. The user experiences are detailed below:

"… the application is very user-friendly; we can use it easily, but you have to download it onto your phone first..." (informant A6, A8)

"… I tried to download it, but during registration, I lost the signal because of a power outage. I've since re-downloaded it and, thankfully, had no further issues.." (Informant A7)

"....I downloaded the SusCatinTing app and found it very straightforward—no obstacles at all." (information A5)

Supporting informants also shared their experiences in facilitating the app's rollout:

"..... I've downloaded the app myself so that I can assist the couples when they are installing it on their devices.. (Informant B4, C2)

".... This application is excellent and comprehensive because it contains all the materials prospective couples actually need.. (Informant D1, D5)

However, several primary informants noted that the application follows a linear progression, requiring users to complete modules in a specific order to unlock subsequent content and earn a certificate:

"..... I have to listen to the materials in order; I can't move on to the next topic if I haven't finished the previous one. The content is locked until you progress..."(Informant A6, A7)

" .....We have to answer the questions within the app to eventually receive the SusCatinTing certificate.." (Informant A3, A4)

6. Benefits of SusCatinTing Application

The in-depth interviews revealed that nearly all prospective couples derived significant benefits from the SusCatinTing application. Key advantages noted by participants included the high utility of the educational content, the provision of digital certificates, and the integration of audio features that allow for repetitive listening. The following excerpts highlight these benefits:

"… This application is very useful because of its short and concise material..."(Informant A1, A10)

"… The information is very useful and easily accessible. In my opinion, it's a great tool because I can even use it while driving; the material is audio-based and can be replayed.." (Informant A4)

".... this application is beneficial, and I have already received my certificate.." (Informant A5)

According to the results of the interviews conducted, the informants did not encounter any significant difficulties when using SusCatinTing application.

"..... For me, the content is highly valuable because the audio format makes it very easy to understand..." (Informant A1, A2)

"..... The information provided is very practical because we can play it whenever we want without having to read through text..." (Informant A3)

"..... It's been very helpful; I now understand what stunting is and how to manage a healthy pregnancy, which is very encouraging for me.." (Informant A5)

This is also supported by the findings of the FGD conducted with key informants as follows:

"..... The information in the app is easy to grasp. While I haven't integrated SusCatinTing into our formal premarital guidance sessions yet, God willing, I will try to use it in the future" (Informant B3)

"..... The data within this app is excellent for expanding knowledge and can serve as a primary resource for community outreach to help reduce stunting rates..." (Informant D1, D8)

"..... Indeed, the information is highly relevant and accessible for prospective couples, making it a very effective tool for our objectives.." (Informant D3)

DISCUSSION

All prospective couples who have registered their marriages at local Offices of Religious Affairs are mandated to participate in premarital guidance sessions conducted by marriage registrars. This requirement is formalized under the Regulation of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance No. 373 of 2017 (Ministry of Religious Affairs Republic of Indonesia. 2018)).

Historically, the curriculum in these sessions has prioritized religious foundations and the concept of a harmonious family, often overlooking critical health education. Nevertheless, these sessions represent a strategic opportunity to educate couples on stunting—a condition of chronic malnutrition occurring during the first 1,000 days of life, spanning from conception through the first two years of a child's life. Structured interventions through the ORA possess significant potential to enhance literacy regarding anemia prevention, reproductive health, healthy pregnancy, and the vital role of premarital maternal nutrition (Saputri & Tumangger, 2019).

This study involved ten prospective spouses, five marriage registrars, five registration officers, and five ORA heads in Kepahiang Regency to evaluate the perceptions and user experiences of the SusCatinTing application. Available on the Play Store, this online platform facilitates access to stunting prevention materials via an audio-enabled interface. Notably, it includes a Google Maps integration to assist users in locating the nearest ORA—a feature rarely found in comparable applications.

The female participants in this study were aged between 22 and 26 years, falling within the optimal reproductive age range. Age is a significant determinant in how individuals acquire information and form perceptions, particularly regarding pregnancy preparation. As Medinawati (2022) notes, increasing age often correlates with broader experience and a higher capacity to process information, enabling women of childbearing age to better comprehend stunting and its early prevention.

Furthermore, educational attainment significantly shapes an individual's life experiences and cognitive perceptions. Education acts as a critical variable in how easily one absorbs complex information, such as nutritional principles. For instance, mothers with higher nutritional literacy are better equipped to make informed dietary choices (Olsa, et al. 2018). Prospective couples with higher educational backgrounds generally show a superior capacity for stunting prevention. Supporting this, Nurfatimah, et al. (2021) further suggests that highly educated pregnant women are more proactive in preventive health measures compared to those with lower levels of education. Ultimately, higher education broadens access to information and fosters a more rational understanding of medical guidance, thereby enhancing an individual's overall perception and health-seeking behavior (Safitri, et al. 2020).

Employment serves as the primary means for individuals to sustain their livelihoods, and professional status can significantly influence family health dynamics. Supporting this, Adriano, L., & Monden, C. W. S. (2019) financial barriers to medical care, attitudes towards modern health services, and resistance to domestic violence may play a role. On the other hand, demanding work schedules may limit parental supervision, potentially leaving health issues, such as stunting undetected in their early stages. Some studies suggest that children of working mothers may face a higher risk of stunting compared to those of non-working mothers. Conversely, employment bolsters household income, which is vital for securing adequate nutrition during the critical first 1,000 days of life. Furthermore, higher professional standing often correlates with advanced knowledge, refined skills, and matured decision-making—qualities essential for managing family health, particularly during the onset of pregnancy.

In-depth interviews regarding the SusCatinTing application revealed that while prospective couples were initially unaware of the platform, they encountered it through promotional posters during their first marriage registration visit. Registration officers facilitate the onboarding process

by explaining the download procedure, which remains highly dependent on internet connectivity. Users must navigate through several preliminary stages before accessing the core content, including inputting the couple's identification data and completing an initial questionnaire designed to assess their baseline knowledge of stunting prevention.

As a digital innovation, SusCatinTing offers a strategic advantage by targeting the "upstream" phase—intervening before conception occurs. This approach allows for the early enhancement of health readiness, nutritional status, and foundational knowledge for building healthy families. Notably, the application is introduced by ORA officers and registrars who may not have previously received formal training on stunting. Without strengthening such upstream policies, the cycle of stunting remains difficult to break, potentially hindering national reduction targets. By utilizing this application, registrars serve as vital intermediaries in the educational process. Observations in Kepahiang Regency indicate that scheduled and structured premarital guidance has evolved beyond a mere administrative formality into a systematic, preventive education movement.

While many prospective couples have heard of stunting through external sources such as posters, their understanding often remains superficial or even inaccurate, with some conflating stunting with general malnutrition. As a group in the pre-conception phase, these couples are a strategic demographic for determining the health quality of the next generation. SusCatinTing addresses current knowledge gaps by providing integrated education on nutrition, reproductive health, anemia prevention, and the significance of the first 1,000 days. The information is presented systematically to improve health literacy and includes self-screening features for early detection of health risks.

Ultimately, the application's primary strengths lie in its accessibility and flexibility. As a digital tool, SusCatinTing offers education that is not confined by office hours or geographic proximity to health facilities—an essential benefit for couples with limited time. This approach signifies a transformative shift for the ORA, transitioning the institution from a traditional marriage registry into a strategic vanguard for improving family quality from the premarital stage onward (Rambe, 2024). The use of digital applications in education and health promotion has significant benefits in enhancing user knowledge, as they enable interactive, flexible, and easily accessible information delivery. Smartphone-based applications are also considered capable of increasing learning interest, material comprehension, and user engagement in the learning process. According to Musgrave et al. (2022), mobile phone applications have the potential to influence behavior in the preconception period.

The perceived benefits of the SusCatinTing application among users include its comprehensive educational content, the provision of digital certificates, and integrated audio features that allow for repetitive listening. Overall, SusCatinTingrning, the platform fosters spousal engagement—specifically encouraging the husband's role in stunting prevention. By providing shared information and digital reminders, the application enables couples to collaboratively navigate pregnancy planning and family nutrition. As noted by Uno (2021), providing targeted support and motivation can inspire individuals to take proactive action. In the context of the Office of Religious Affairs (ORA), leadership plays a pivotal role in this process. Aligning with Thoha's (2016) theory, fostering a sense of responsibility can enhance performance and personal satisfaction. Furthermore, leaders motivate subordinates by addressing both emotional and rational aspects, thereby driving the dedication necessary to fulfill organizational responsibilities (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Overall, SusCatinTing offers a technologically-driven, practical solution that supports the sustainability and effectiveness of national stunting reduction programs.

The implementation of premarital education through the SusCatinTing application has demonstrated positive progress, allowing couples to enhance their knowledge via a digital platform easily accessible on the Play Store. The involvement of ORA officers in providing

counseling has been effective, supported by the leadership of ORA heads who manage motivation, evaluation, and information dissemination. According to Muninjaya (2017), effective communication—such as routine meetings and periodic briefings—is essential for improving coordination and achieving organizational goals. In addition, eHealth resources (ie, online web resources or apps) designed to enhance healthy behaviors are appealing: they are highly accessible and sustainable.

However, current efforts must be augmented by further action. There is a clear need for field supervision to monitor the practical utilization of the SusCatinTing application in stunting reduction efforts. This should be supported by formal programs and written evaluation reports, which serve as both evidence of activity and a baseline for assessing program success and refining future interventions.

CONCLUSION

The "SusCatinTing" (Premarital Course for Stunting Prevention) application serves as a viable digital innovation, especially for prospective couples involved in stunting prevention efforts. By offering unique features – such as audio-based learning, Google Maps integration, digital certification, and ease of access via the Play Store, the application provides an engaging and accessible platform. It represents a critical first step in family planning, enabling early intervention against stunting. It can be concluded that the SusCatinTing application shows potential as an easily accessible digital education platform for preventing stunting before marriage among prospective couples

It is highly recommended that the SusCatinTing application be adopted for all prospective couples across Bengkulu Province to maximize the influence of such motivation. Furthermore, policy support from stakeholders is essential to integrate the application's "Certificate" as a formal requirement for marriage registration at local Offices of Religious Affairs.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

LH was responsible for drafting the manuscript and data processing. BYS developed the research instrument, revised the manuscript, and conducted data collection (in-depth interviews). DEN facilitated the FGD, managed data analysis, and contributed to the initial draft.

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