Tools, evidence and research gaps for more effective community health worker performance and productivity

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The Need For Establishing a Global CHW Research Agenda

- Outstanding identified CHW knowledge gaps
- No current platform for keeping track of research efforts or forum to disseminate and exchange new information and evidence
- Stronger evidence-base needed for answering challenging and outstanding questions of policy and programmatic significance
Global CHW Harmonization Effort

3 Working Papers Commissioned by GHWA presented at the 3rd Global HRH Forum:
• Framework for partners harmonized support on CHWs
• Monitoring and accountability framework for CHWs
• CHW Knowledge gaps and defining a Global Research Agenda

Purpose: to identify all CHW knowledge gaps and outline recommendations for the way in which research should be conducted to enable greater benefit and utilization of results.

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Findings

Thematic Area 1: Effectiveness of CHWs in relation to Specific Tasks and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific tasks</th>
<th>Further investigation of the effectiveness of CHWs compared with other providers delivering the same intervention in the areas of maternal and neonatal health, drug-based interventions and HIV/AIDS care</th>
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</table>
| Workload       | - investigation of workload, safety and quality of CHWs with multiple tasks compared to CHWs with fewer tasks  
                 | - investigation of different forms of shift work  
                 | - investigation of CHWs offering preventive health care compared to CHWs offering curative health care  
                 | - investigation of CHW productivity in relation to single and multiple health issues focus  
                 | - investigation of optimal geographic/population focus |
Findings

Thematic Area 2: Systems and Contextual Factors that Influence CHWs and their Performance

| Health System Factors | -investigation of health system support (e.g. referral systems, formal linkages with health system functions/entities, supervision, supply chain) and their impact on CHW performance  
|                       | -investigation of the potential role of CHW associations |
| Community Factors     | -investigation of community support (e.g. community involvement in CHW program design, management, implementation, and M&E, formal linkages with community entities/groups, community incentives) and their impact on CHW performance |
| Combined Health System and Community Support | -investigation of impact from combined health system and community support on CHW performance (e.g. joint supervision, incentive structures) |

*Central Recommendation from USAID-hosted CHW Evidence Summit*
## Findings

### Thematic Area 2: Systems and Contextual Factors that Influence CHWs and their Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Area</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention Design Factors</strong></td>
<td>-investigation and increased documentation of how interventions are designed and implemented</td>
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<td><strong>Selection of CHWs</strong></td>
<td>-further investigation on optimal selection criteria for CHWs</td>
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<td><strong>Training and Continuing Education of CHWs</strong></td>
<td>-investigation of effectiveness of different training approaches</td>
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<td><strong>Supervision of CHWs</strong></td>
<td>-investigation of effectiveness of systems of supervision</td>
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<td><strong>Remuneration of CHWs</strong></td>
<td>-investigation on different models and combinations of remuneration</td>
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<td><strong>Information Systems and Monitoring of CHWs</strong></td>
<td>-investigation of the use of information systems for CHW performance</td>
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<td><strong>Use of New Technologies</strong></td>
<td>-further investigation on the expanded use of new technologies for CHW programs with focus on sustainability and scale-up</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Broader Contextual Factors</strong></td>
<td>-investigation on impact of cultural differences, economy and political context, geographic location (e.g. urban vs. rural effectiveness)</td>
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Example: Uganda Village Health Team Productivity and Performance Study

• Evidence gap on how to quantify productivity of community health volunteers and how it relates to their performance, and what factors influence it
• Evidence needed to inform better policy and programming
• Study questions:
  • How can we measure VHT productivity and performance across multiple roles?
  • What factors influence productivity and performance?
  • What is the relationship between productivity and performance?
• Study of 150 VHTs in one district: observations in community settings, record review, interviews
• Findings expected by April 2014
Example: Ethiopia Community Health System

- Engage community groups to help support HEWs and strengthen the linkage between the facility-based health system and the community-based health system
- Raised the profile, awareness and acceptance of the HEWs in the community and among key leaders in different community groups
- Strengthened the system for community representatives to support and guide HEWs in reaching community members
Example: Madagascar CHV Program
Functionality and Performance

<table>
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<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>Recruitment (best practice)</td>
<td>Equipment and supplies</td>
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<td>Initial training</td>
<td>Individual performance appraisal</td>
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<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>Country ownership</td>
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<td>Opportunities for advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation and information management</td>
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Identified Research Challenges

• Defining and reliably measuring productivity and performance
• Accessing CHWs in their communities
• Conducting larger scale research activities
• Capacity of researchers based in LMICs
Research Approaches

- Measurement of Results
- Focus on program scale-up and sustainability
- Mixed Research Methodologies
- Economic Evaluation
- Increased Documentation
- Increased Capacity Building for LMIC Investigators

More emphasis is needed
Development of a Logic Model for CHW Programs

Moving Forward

• Announcement of Commitment to CHWs in Recife (http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/knowledge/resources/chw_output_joint_commitment_2013.pdf)

• GHWA CHW Global Resource Group

• Development of CHW Thematic Working Group for Health Systems Global and 3rd Health Systems Research Symposium (Cape Town, September 2014)
  • Purpose to strengthen the role of CHWs in health system development
  • Bring together a diverse array of individuals and networks involved in CHW programming
  • Encourage the use of emerging evidence base in policy and practice
  • Create environment for shared learning and alignment of research with most identified needs

• Contact: Kate Hawkins (kate@pamoja.uk.com)
Discussion Questions

• What research have you done around community health workers and what were the key findings?

• What lessons did you learn about how to conduct research about community health workers?