

Sixteenth meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs on COVID-19 and the NCD-related SDGs

Date of meeting: July 24, 2020

Participants: Around 57 participants joined, representing 15 members of the Task Force

Subject: Providing chronic care during the COVID-19 pandemic: experience and lessons from Western Kenya.

1. The World Bank facilitated this meeting with Dr Jemima Kamano from AMPATH presenting their primary integrated care project for four chronic diseases – diabetes, hypertension, cervical and breast cancer – (PIC4C) supported by the World Bank with financing from Access Accelerated (presentation attached).
2. Kenya has a rapidly rising burden of NCDs, low awareness and poor health seeking behavior, with late stage diagnosis and poor outcomes. The Government of Kenya's response has included elaborating NCD strategies, strengthening health promotion, and gradually extending access to the National Health Insurance Fund, which includes enhancing the essential healthcare package to include selective NCD interventions. The current COVID-19 outbreak in Kenya risks overturning progress on NCD prevention and control. The AMPATH model aims to improve awareness on NCDs and to promote health seeking behavior at primary care level in line with Ministry of Health policy. The World Bank pilot NCD project is extending the model to two additional counties in Western Kenya to expand coverage and generate further evidence for scale up.
3. Healthcare investments have historically been directed towards high level facilities, and sophisticated machines for treatment, often in urban centers. However, this approach is extremely expensive, and does not address the underlying causes of NCDs. The PIC4C approach has been to look at patient care holistically, also addressing the determinants of health. PIC4C aims to integrate hypertension, diabetes, breast and cervical cancer, as tracer conditions, into primary health care. The model builds and leverages on platforms used for HIV/AIDS care.
4. Following a health literacy survey on NCDs in the two counties in Western Kenya, AMPATH revised and fine-tuned its chronic care model. Community members, including health volunteers, were trained to provide health education and screening and to facilitate patient support groups. This resulted in increased rates of screening and diagnosis of diabetes, cervical cancer and hypertension.
5. Key challenges have included supply chain and health financing challenges, and now, COVID-19-related service disruption, which has halted public gatherings and face to face meetings at community and hospital levels. AMPATH has been adapting their services to respond to these challenges, by encouraging follow-up of patients through mobile phone technologies, triaging patients, and providing patients larger supplies of medicines.

6. PIC4C demonstrates the importance of: (i) promoting task shifting/sharing through use of community health volunteers and nurses; (ii) having well trained healthcare workers, engaging patients, and mobilizing local authorities to contribute to quality health promotion and health care and sustainability of activities; (iii) supporting patients to enroll in the National Health Insurance Fund and to engage in income generating activities in parallel to establishing services; and (iv) delivering integrated chronic care in ways that can respond to changing environments such as COVID-19.
7. Interventions included those from the Ministry of Health, World Bank and WHO Kenya. The discussants and participants noted the unique features and flexibility of PIC4C model, and how it is gradually improving health seeking behavior, promoting early detection and initial treatment for several key NCDs, and how it has been able to respond to the needs of the local community, especially during COVID-19 context in line with government policy.

Other issues:

The 2020 ECOSOC resolution on the work of the Task Force was agreed on 21 July 2020. The recommendations are broad, deep and action orientated, and emphasize the role of the Task Force in assisting Member States in their COVID-19 response and recovery plans, including through the NCD Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

An updated draft of the Task Force paper on NCDs and COVID-19 was circulated for a second round of comments and will be soon submitted for final clearance and publication.

Next meeting

Friday 31 July 2020, 16:00 – 17:00 CET.

29 July 2020