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Public health nurses making a difference: Increasing TB case notification rates through community-led TB Campaigns (TBC) in 11 Regions in Tanzania

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Statement of Problem: Tanzania ranks 15th among 22 TB high-burden countries and 6th in Africa. From April 2016 to June 2018, Save the Children Tanzania implemented a Global Fund-supported TB /HIV program in partnership with four local sub-recipients in 14 high TB/HIV-burden regions. Despite reaching DoTs coverage of 100% and treatment success rate of 89%, TB case detection remains at 33%. Two thirds of people estimated to have TB are not reached by the health system. Challenges include poorly equipped diagnostic facilities, low community awareness; distance from communities to diagnostic centres; break down in the referral supply chain with no mechanisms for escorted referrals. The program supports the Government of Tanzania's goals of increasing TB case detection efforts and reducing the incidence of TB by 25% and mortality by 50% of TB and Leprosy by 2020.

A key intervention undertaken to achieve these goals are community-led TB Campaigns modelled along Combination HIV Prevention Campaigns aimed at increasing community TB awareness, strengthening active case-finding and community uptake of TB/HIV collaborative services. With public health nurses as the focal points, 11 one-day TB campaigns were conducted in November to December 2017. This consists of community-friendly social mobilisation strategies and campaign actions including public education through mass-media, folk-media/theatre to mobilise communities to campaign grounds to receive TB Health Education, TB-screening and on-site sputum examination of presumptive cases in collaboration with District Laboratory technicians. The Purpose of this study is to evaluate the success of this intervention vis-à-vis the role and involvement of public health nurses in implementing TB prevention and treatment programs in Tanzania. During the campaign, 2766 community members were screened for TB; specimens of 1298 (46%) presumptive TB cases were processed on-site; 376 (29%) were confirmed as TB cases.

Conclusion and Significance: The results show that delivering TB services through community-taskforces using community-friendly campaign-actions led by public health nurses generates community-demand for services and increases TB case-notification by combining leadership engagement/advocacy with service-delivery at community-doorsteps in a fun environment. A targeted scale-up of this approach therefore has significant promise in ending the TB epidemic in Tanzania.

Biography

Godwin Asuquo is an international public health leader with about 20 years' experience in nursing, reproductive health and child rights, governance, HIV/AIDS/ TB and primary health care program management including health systems strengthening. He has consistently worked in senior leadership positions delivering impactful results for communities served in Africa including Nigeria, Chad, Senegal, Egypt, Morocco, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania. Tasks undertaken during these assignments range from policy development, program management, training, research, organizational development, and strengthening capacity for HIV/AIDS, obstetrical care and human resources for health. He was until June, 2018, the Chief of Party/Program Director for Save the Children's Global Fund Program in Tanzania. He is currently providing leadership to the Africa Centre for Health Leadership in Nigeria. Previously, he served as Primary Health Coordinator, Nurse and midwives Educator and a Lecturer in Public Health and Nursing at the University of Maiduguri and Imo State University in Nigeria.

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