EAST, CENTRAL & SOUTHERN AFRICA HEALTH COMMUNITY

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

LATEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT

ECSA-HC Trains Senior Laboratory Staff on Global Laboratory Leadership Program in Lilongwe, Malawi

ECSA-HC under its COVID-19 project has hosted the second training on the GLLP program that aims at strengthening of laboratory systems in the region.

1mproving TB control: M&E training helps professionals leverage data for effective decision-making

ECSA-HC under its Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health System Support Project (SATBHSS) Convenes a five-day M&E training on data for effective decision making.

Regional Cross Border Referral System (CBRS) training of trainers

TB in the Mining Sector project (TIMS III)hosts a two-day training on the regional cross border referral system for super users so as to cascade the trainings at country level.

ECSA-HC Supports the Establishment of a Regional TB Data Repository

ECSA-HC TRAINS SENIOR LABORATORY STAFF ON GLOBAL LABORATORY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Between the 13th and 24th of February 2023, the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) through its COVID-19 Regional Mechanism Project, conducted a five-day Global Laboratory Leadership program training in Lilongwe, Malawi. The training brought together 20 senior laboratory staff from the environmental , health and animal sectors in a bid to advance laboratory systems through a progressive program that develops knowledge and skills in laboratory management and leadership.

The Global Laboratory Leadership Program (GLLP) provides a One Health Approach to advancing laboratory systems, culminating in learning and practice in the development of laboratory systems. The five-day training focused on developing leadership skills and expertise for senior laboratory staff, in order to drive innovation and excellence in laboratory management.

This is the second face-to-face training session, out of the three planned sessions. The previous training, which took place in Zambia, set the foundation for the program and introduced the participants to the program's objectives, framework and content.

The participants received training on various aspects of laboratory management and leadership, including laboratory strategic planning and management, financial management, human resource management, quality management systems, laboratory safety, and the One Health Approach. The training utilized interactive training methods, such as group discussions, case studies, and role-plays, which encouraged active participation and enhanced learning.

The GLLP program aims to strengthen laboratory systems in the ECSA-HC region, by building the capacity of laboratory staff in leadership and management. The program will ultimately contribute to the overall strengthening of laboratory systems in the region, and promote the delivery of quality laboratory services in the health, animal and environment sectors.

ECSA-HC is committed to ensuring that the laboratory systems in the region are of high quality, in line with global standards, and able to support the health and well-being of the communities they serve. The GLLP program is one of the many initiatives that ECSA-HC is implementing to strengthen laboratory systems in the region, and it is expected to have a significant impact on the capacity of laboratory staff to manage and lead their institutions effectively.

M&E TRAINING HELPS PROFESSIONALS LEVERAGE DATA FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

ECSA-HC is currently implementing The Southern Africa TB and Health System Support Project in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia. Under this project, among other initiatives health facilities are required to collect data on tuberculosis (TB) on a quarterly basis and submit quarterly reports to the district and national levels. However, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity building and data quality assessment conducted in 2021 and 2022 revealed that there was limited capacity for data analysis and utilization for decision-making at the local level. This prompted a recommendation that health staff, including facility and district teams, should be trained and supported through data-driven supervision to collect, analyze, and use data meaningfully to strengthen TB care and prevention.

To address this need, the East, Central and Southern African Health Community (ECSA-HC) recently convened a five-day training session on M&E principles for TB/HIV officers and data managers from selected districts and health facilities in Lesotho. A total of 30 TB/HIV officers and data managers were trained.

The training covered the entire cascade of data generation, analysis, and use for decision-making. The training aimed to equip health staff with the skills to analyze and utilize TB data effectively to enhance TB care and prevention in the project countries.

Effective data analysis and utilization are crucial for improving TB control and prevention, especially in resource-limited settings. This M&E training is an important step towards building capacity among health staff to better understand and utilize data to inform decision-making. The training will ensure that TB data collected from health facilities are not only recorded and reported, but also analyzed and used meaningfully to strengthen TB care and prevention efforts in the project countries.

By improving the M&E capacity for TB care and prevention in Southern Africa, the Southern Africa TB and Health System Support Project is working towards a future where TB is better controlled and ultimately eliminated.

REGIONAL CROSS BORDER REFERRAL SYSTEM (CBRS) TRAINING OF TRAINERS

The TB in the Mining Sector in Southern Africa Project Phase III (TIMS III), which commenced in July 2021, one of the key interventions is the implementation of a Cross Border Referral System (CBRS). The CBRS is an electronic platform that facilitates the sharing of patient medical information/patient files of TB patients across borders for continuity of care. It is envisaged that the The successful implementation of the CBRS would strengthen continuity of care, reduce loss to follow-up, and lead to better treatment outcomes among key populations.

The CBRS has already been installed in 10 of the 16 SADC Member States, namely Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. However, some challenges were noted in the implementation of the CBRS, which include the need to strengthen capacity for implementing the system at the country level and the need to support member states to scale up the CBRS to other sites.

To address these challenges, the SADC Secretariat along with (ECSA-HC) conducted a two days training of super users that will in-turn support rolling-out of in-country training for implementation of the CBRS. The training was attended by M&E officers from national TB programs and ICT officers supporting Ministries of health. Countries that that participated included Botswana, Tanzania, Lesotho, Eswatini, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia and Malawi,. The training aimed to enhance their knowledge and skills in the implementation of the CBRS and to equip them to train others at the country level.

The successful implementation of the CBRS is critical for continuum of care for TB patients working or who worked in the Mines .

Dr. Charles Sandy-TB Specialist

Dr.Willy Amis-SADC

ECSA-HC SUPPORTS ESTABLISHMENT OF A SADC REGIONAL TB DATA REPOSITORY AND DASHBOARD

Under TIMS III, ECSA-HC is supporting the establishment of a Regional TB data repository. The repository shall be housed at the SADC secretariat and will be an E-platform used by countries to share data with the SADC secretariat. Through the Global Fund support, the SADC secretariat convened a 2 days meeting in Johannesburg (16th and 17th February 2023) to kick-start the process of developing the repository. The repository will also host the regional dashboard which will show-case regional TB data aggregates and also support the development of the annual SADC TB report. The University of Dar-es-salaam has been awarded to support the development and establishment of the SADC TB regional repository.

The development of the repository will also enhance collaboration between countries, researchers, and other stakeholders in the fight against TB. With the region facing the challenges of TB co-infection with HIV/AIDS, drug resistance, and limited access to quality diagnosis and treatment, the establishment of the Regional TB data repository is a significant milestone in the regional response to TB.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

- Key stakeholder Workshop for the validation of the generic MHS SOP-Dar es salaam, Tanzania
- M&E Training on Data for decision making- Lilongwe, Malawi.
- EU-Africa PerMed Stakeholder Workshop- Cape Town, South Africa
- Slit-skin smear for leprosy Training- Lusaka, Zambia

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