

Evaluation of the malaria surveillance system in Chadiza District, Zambia, 2021-2023

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Introduction

Malaria remains a major global health challenge, particularly in regions where the disease is endemic. The malaria rapid report system (MRRS) had not been evaluated in the Chadiza district in the past 3 years. We evaluated the malaria rapid report system (MRRS) using the United States Centres for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to evaluate the surveillance system.

Methods

We conducted a mixed-method descriptive study.

We reviewed the records and abstracted malaria data from January 2021 to December 2023 from MMRS- DHIS2 for the district to assess its quality. We interviewed sixty-two (62) malaria focal point persons, which included health care workers and community-based volunteers, using a semi-structured questionnaire to assess the simplicity, flexibility, acceptability, representativeness and stability of the system. Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and R.

Results

All 62 malaria focal point persons understood the case definition for malaria, found it easy to fill in the data tools and expressed willingness to continue

using the system, while 61 (98%) found the system to be useful. The mean score for other attributes were: data quality (97%), representativeness (86%), stability (77%), timeliness (65 %) and flexibility (56%).

Conclusion

The malaria rapid report system in Chadiza met its set objective of monitoring the trends. It was simple, useful, acceptable, representative, stable, complete, but not flexible and timely. There is a need to integrate the system with other public health programs such as immunisation campaigns, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis to strengthen the entire health system and to ensure frequent supportive supervision to improve timeliness of reporting.