surveybe

Getting effective anti-malarial drugs to remote communities

The Research Agenda

In Tanzania, surveybe is working with the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and the MIT-Zaragoza International Logistics Programme to assess the coverage and uptake of Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACT) in remote areas of Tanzania.

CLINTON
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This study is being conducted in collaboration with the Tanzania National Malaria Control Programme and the Tanzania Food and Drug Authority. Funding is provided by the Gates Foundation and DfID.

The Survey Tools and Instruments

The CHAI team have enlisted the services of EDI to use the surveybe software suite for the design and implementation of this 2 year, multi-component survey in Mtwara, Lindi and Rukwa regions of Tanzania   Whilst the overall data collection process is managed by EDI, surveybe was the obvious solution to also provide the electronic data collection tools. The survey involves three main components: drug retailer audits, customer exit interviews and traditional household surveys, which are conducted continuously over a 21 month period beginning with a pre-intervention baseline survey.

Four survey tools were developed within surveybe for this purpose including:

Monthly Basic Retail Audits which involve a physical inspection of the inventory of anti-malarial medicines at each of the Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets (ADDO's) allowing CHAI to monitor ACT stock levels and determine the appropriate level of incentive for each wholesaler.

Six Monthly Comprehensive Retail Audits include a more in-depth inspection of the ADDO's stocks and an personal interview with the store owner/manager.

Quarterly Customer Exit Interviews at each ADDO to gather customer information about the products they purchased, the factors that influenced their choice as well as capturing basic socio-economic data about the individual, their family and home.

Household Surveys of a random sample of households in communities serviced by the ADDO's capturing a wide range of household data including an extensive module on household member illness, treatment seeking behaviour, drug preference/purchase and health outcomes. A baseline and two follow up surveys are conducted during the project lifetime.

The Surveybe Advantage

Surveybe and EDI in Tanzania, provided CHAI with the ideal partners by offering both in-depth country knowledge and a robust and proven data collection application that integrated data validations at the point of collection and removed the need for the traditional double-blind data entry project phase and consequently the delays and potential for error introduction associated with this technique from the project timeline.

CHAI needed to ensure that the data flowed smoothly and efficiently from the interviewer via data managers to the CHAI researchers and that robust quality control checks were in place so that researchers could make immediate decisions on incentive levels for the ADDO's. Using surveybe ensured that these requirements were satisfied with ease:

- The **unlimited building of bespoke validation rules, consistency checks and skip logic** within the surveybe designer ensured that all data was automatically checked (and where applicable errors corrected) whilst the interviewer conducts the live interview with the respondent.

- **Reduced time between data collection and data analysis** means that CHAI are be able to quickly measure and analyse the coverage and uptake of ACTs on a monthly basis enabling project managers to make decisions quickly.

- The retail audit requires the interviewer to record stocks of every anti-malarial drugs held by the ADDO, with over 150 variants it would require 10 plus pages of a paper questionnaire just to list the known variants. The **Surveybe dynamic roster provides the interviewer with a pre-populated list of known variants** as well as allowing for the recording of drugs not on the existing list which can then be easily incorporated into the next months list without the need to reprint and update the questionnaire. Providing a pre-populated list also removes any potential errors in spellings of complex chemical terms, and ensures a much cleaner project data set.

- The **presenting of images in the questionnaire** ensured that the ADDO and interviewer were always clear which drug, and equally as importantly which size of packet/quantity, was being discussed and recorded. With such a lengthy list of variants this reduced the potential for recording error.

Outcomes and extensions

The nature of the surveybe software and inherent questionnaire structure that it employs means that, as the months pass and ADDO's receive new stock items, or quantities that the project manager or data manager can easily include these changes into the audit sheets to ensure that the modules remain up to date and relevant.

Surveybe is also working alongside EDI Tanzania to provide technical assistance to the field teams and data teams to ensure sustained success in the project. This includes an increase of scope within the project as the ease of use, features and flexibility of surveybe meant that CHAI could make financial savings within the project; and so these funds were ploughed back into the research to further increase the volume of data collected… resulting in an increase in access to ACT drugs.

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