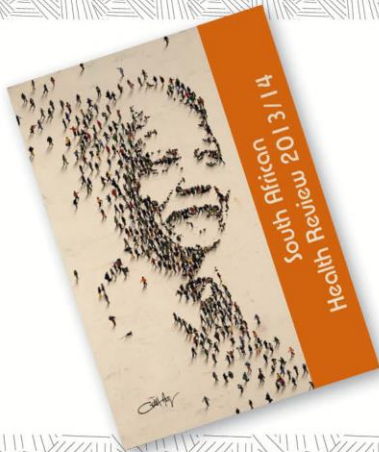




HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST



THE EXTENT AND IMPACT OF TB DRUG STOCK-OUTS SAHR KWIK SKWIZ SERIES

This KWIK SKWIZ:



summarises Chapter 15 of the 2013/14 South African Health Review.

- Drug stock-outs in South Africa have been labelled a national crisis, challenging patient care, threatening progress in new treatments, and bearing significant medical implications for the health system and its patients. For individuals, stock-outs and shortages lead to incomplete doses, interruptions or default on treatment (creating a higher risk of infections), complications, morbidity and mortality. Alternative treatments can have adverse outcomes and unintended side-effects.
- The National Department of Health (NDoH) recognises that an early warning system to report drug shortages, and to manage and maintain a well-functioning drug supply chain, is crucial to strengthen and improve the overall quality of services, and intends developing a national computer software system that will act as a stock information mechanism to facilitate communication between drug depots, suppliers and health facilities. The system will gather and deliver information about drug supply demands across facilities in the country, which will relieve and reduce ongoing drug stock-outs.
- Of utmost concern is that stock-outs increase the risk of drug resistance, and drug-resistant viral strains can be rapidly transmitted among populations, ultimately limiting treatment options. Moreover, patients without funds to access health facilities or buy drugs from private outlets are most at risk of serious illness. Drug shortages impose an added burden on healthcare professionals who have to dedicate more time and capacity to dealing with their effects and impact.
- Inept supply chain management, the shortage of pharmacists, inadequate resources, and inaccurate estimation of drug supply and demand levels have been identified as primary catalysts of drug stock-outs. Communication between suppliers, depots and health facilities is deficient. However, a review conducted in October 2013 indicated that challenges centred less on supply chain management and more on:
 - » weak quantifications of the market size for TB drugs and commodities, largely due to the low skills and inexperience of staff currently assigned to this role;
 - » manufacturing limitations that hinder the roll-out of fixed-dose combinations of ARV drugs, along with underdeveloped programmatic pharmacovigilance;

- » a disproportionate level of risk in contracting suppliers, and non-tender compliance penalties associated with provincial depots;
 - » sub-optimal security of stock control with no routine checking, poor quality of suppliers' service and no penalties for suppliers' poor performance.
- The Stop Stock Outs Survey (September – October 2013) was South Africa's first telephonic interview survey on availability of ARV and TB drugs. The 2013 stock-out survey showed that 21.5 per cent of facilities surveyed had stock-outs of any ARV or TB drug, with a wide range at district level from no stock-outs to over 50 per cent in five districts, of which three were in the Free State.
 - At the provincial level, drug stock-outs have affected all nine provinces, with Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Free State being hardest hit. The Free State leads with more than half of health facilities reporting drug stock-outs in all districts of the Free State.
 - Although the extent and location of stock-outs varies considerably over time and between the available data sources, substantial stock issues regularly exist in several districts. The barriers are multidimensional and more research using existing information should be done to determine the impact of drug stock-outs on TB outcomes.
 - Recommendations include the revision of standard operating procedures and development of guidelines to prevent stock shortages. The formal system to monitor drug stock-outs across all districts' health facilities should be strengthened and the data quality of stock-out indicators improved through more use of the available data for research and monitoring of health system performance. Surveys on stock-outs should be done with improved methodology and rigour. Greater integration of data sources will enable analysis that

policymakers can use to assess strategies, identify systemic barriers and develop interventions that address this public health concern.

SOURCE:

Seunanden T, Day C. The extent and impact of TB drug stock-outs. In Padarath A, English R, editors. South African Health Review 2013/14. Durban: Health Systems Trust; 2014.

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