Strengthening Nigeria’s Community-Level Health System to Increase Access to Quality-Assured Medicines for Low-Income, Rural Clients

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Activity Description

The state of medication availability in Nigeria is critical, with 300 million people lacking access to essential medicines in many parts of the country. This is a major concern in Nigeria, where health systems are failing to meet the basic needs of the population. Quality-assured medicines are critical for improving patient outcomes, yet many rural communities lack access to high-quality medications.

Following sensitization workshops with NAPPMED, PCN and PQM+ held sensitization workshops in all 36 states. These workshops raised awareness among PPMVs about the importance of registering with PCN and the benefits of high-quality medicines. Participants learned about the roles and responsibilities of PCN, the benefits of registration, and the importance of quality assurance in the pharmaceutical sector.

Activity Impact

This activity strengthened the regulatory and enforcement systems to ensure the availability of quality medicines. The PQM+ collaborative effort provided technical support for registration and quality assurance, improving the capacity of the PCN to oversee and support the registration and quality assurance of medicines. The surveys found that many PPMVs do not have licenses, do not follow good pharmacy practice, and stock prescription drugs in addition to over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, and obtain medicines from illegal drug markets. A study from 2009 had found that more than half the antimalarials stocked by PPMVs were substandard or falsified.

Evidence

This mobile health program improved on previous interventions. Studies show that the increase in the number of PPMVs registered with PCN significantly increased the availability of quality medicines. In collaboration with NAPPMED, PCN and PQM+, the following results were achieved:

- Improved awareness among PPMVs about the importance of registration and quality assurance.
- Increased registration of PPMVs with PCN.
- Improved quality assurance and regulatory systems.
- Increased access to quality medicines for low-income and rural populations.

Lessons Learned

Collaboration with NAPPMED was essential for the success of this activity. NAPPMED, being the major player in the market, supported the registration and quality assurance efforts. Lessons learned include:

- The importance of collaboration between regulatory agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- The need for sustained funding and support for quality assurance programs.
- The role of training and capacity building in improving the regulatory systems.
- The importance of community engagement in improving access to quality medicines.

Facilities

A patent medicines shop

Challenges

PPMV activity strengthened the regulatory system in Nigeria, yet many PPMVs lack the capacity to oversee and support the registration and quality assurance of medicines. This activity helped address the most immediate structural causes of inequitable availability of quality medicines by: (1) increasing the number of PPMVs registered with PCN, (2) improving the capacity of PCN to oversee and support the registration and quality assurance of medicines, and (3) increasing awareness among PPMVs about the importance of registering with PCN and the benefits of high-quality medicines.

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