

Track/Category: D11

Title: Experiences in using the Child Health Card in Zimbabwe, towards implementation of 2010 WHO guidelines

Authors: ¹A. Muchedzi, ¹R. Musarandega, ¹B. Chikwinya, ¹A. Mahomva, ²T. Kureya, ³M. Miti, ³A. Chigumira

Affiliations: ¹ Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation; ² Development Data; ³ Ministry of Health and Child Welfare- Nutrition Unit

Background: A revised version of the Zimbabwe Child Health Card (CHC), including an HIV care section, was launched by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MOHCW) in 2006. This assessment was conducted to review the completeness of information recorded on the CHCs and to identify challenges faced with this follow-up tool for the identification of HIV-exposed infants in preparation for the implementation of the 2010 WHO PMTCT guidelines.

Methodology: A survey was conducted among a nationally representative sample of CHCs of infants between 6-24 months in 20 districts in Zimbabwe. CHCs were reviewed for completeness using a checklist while a semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the health workers. The study measured the proportion of infants whose CHCs were correctly filled in for each broad category of the CHC, using the national procedures manual as the standard. Data was analyzed using SPSS.

Result: A total of 3930 CHCs were reviewed and 280 health workers interviewed. Completeness ranged from 7% - 89%, with the sections concerning HIV care information having the lowest completeness rates. A total of 449 cards were marked "Yes" on the "at-risk for MTCT" section, indicating that the infants were HIV-exposed, yet only 28% of these had completed HIV care sections and 7% had completed infant-feeding sections. Only half (53%) of health-workers interviewed felt competent in using the CHC. Health workers reported challenges in completing the HIV Care section (27%), MTCT information (13%), and infant feeding information (14%).

Conclusion: The CHC is currently storing useable information, although there is low completeness on the HIV care section. Health-workers will need to be trained on the use of CHC and the CHC will be revised to address gaps in completion. The HIV care section will be revised for the implementation of the 2010 WHO guidelines.