BLC facilitates Windhoek Central and Katutura State Hospitals’ quality improvement journey

With support from the USAID-funded BLC Project, two of Namibia’s busiest hospitals took the first step towards their accreditation – a process that will significantly improve the quality and standards of care to thousands of Namibians receiving health services from these two public institutions.

In the last week of November 2012, BLC and the Council for Health Services Accreditation in Southern Africa (COHSASA) oriented 62 staff and management from Windhoek Central and Katutura State Hospitals on the fundamentals of the Quality Improvement and Leadership Program (QIL). The training workshop was facilitated by the Quality Assurance Unit of the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Services.

“The training was an eye opener. We don’t have to be embarrassed about the current quality of our work and continue to deliver poor quality services. Let’s be open and identify the gaps so that we can address them, for the answer lies with us,” said Hilma Kashupi, the Head of Nursing Services at Windhoek Central Hospital.

In 2013, BLC will train eight volunteers from each facility to serve as coaches and mentors for the hospital teams. They will be responsible for reporting progress to the hospital steering committee, providing feedback to hospital teams, and liaising with the QIL team consisting of BLC, COHSASA, and the Quality Assurance Unit. To coordinate efforts and develop a partnership, the two hospitals will work together in January and February 2013 to conduct self-assessments that will help inform their quality improvement work plans for the next two years.

Contributed by Rachel Basirika (Capacity Building Advisor: BLC)
**SCMS Supports Training on Data Analysis and Use of Syspro® for Staff of the Regional Medical Stores**

SCMS supported the warehouse managers at Oshakati and Rundu Multi Regional Medical Depots (MRMDs) to conduct refresher trainings on Syspro® (inventory management software) and data analysis using Microsoft Excel 2007/10. The trainings took place between 3rd and 5th December 2012 for Oshakati MRMD and between 7th and 12th December 2012 for Rundu MRMD.

The trainings were aimed at improving inventory management practices, especially the level of accuracy between the physical count and stock records in Syspro®. The Syspro® training focused on order entry and receipt (to and from the CMS), client order entry and maintenance, order queries, inventory queries and stock movement reports. The Principal Pharmacist at Oshakati and the Data Typist at Rundu were co-facilitators. A total of 16 staff members from both MRMDs participated in the Syspro® refresher training, including three pharmacists, two pharmacy assistants and 11 warehouse/data clerks.

The intermediate level Microsoft Excel training was facilitated by SCMS technical advisors and was targeted at six senior staff, three from each of the MRMDs. The objective of this training was to enable warehouse managers to extract and manipulate data from Syspro® and prepare summary reports for decision making at the warehouse or at the regional directorate level.

The senior staff found the Excel training especially relevant with the principal pharmacist at Oshakati MRMD having this to say: “The training is useful for the daily work I am doing and the refresher training is highly recommended. We really enjoyed and benefited from the training. And we will continue to train (exercise), as you said, it's the only way to master it (Excel)”.

**SCMS participates in NACS Programme Review**

SCMS participated in the nutrition assessment counseling and support (NACS) programme review exercise to evaluate the performance of the program for the purposes of quality improvement and to inform future programmatic strategic decision making. The NACS program review was undertaken from the 15th to the 27th of November with the initial two days being the training of data collectors, five days of data collection and two days of data cleaning and entry.

Contributed by Alemayehu Wolde and Benjamin Ongeri (Senior Technical Advisors/SCMS)
The main objectives were to assess the quality of NACS services (nutrition assessment, nutrition counseling based on assessment results, prescription of therapeutic and supplementary foods for malnourished clients, monitoring of adherence to nutrition care plans, commodity management, and data recording and reporting).

In addition, the review assessed client awareness and uptake of and satisfaction with NACS services, acceptability of and adherence to specialized food products, identifying barriers that health care providers face in implementing routine and integrating NACS into HIV, PMTCT, and maternal and child health services. Prior to the data collection exercise, SCMS participated in the development and review of the data collection tools to ensure all aspects of commodity management were addressed. Six data collection tools were developed and finalised following their pre-testing in June 2012. The tools included a facility in-charge questionnaire, NACS health provider questionnaire, client questionnaire, facility checklist and questionnaire, provider-client observation checklist and NACS register audit. The review was a cross-sectional survey that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The survey targeted the health personnel implementing NACS, facility in-charges and clients at the selected NACS sites.

A total of 24 sites were visited in six districts namely, Engela, Grootfontein, Katima Mulilo, Keetmanshoop, Mariental and Onandjokwe. Four sites were visited per district and consisted of one hospital ART/communicable disease clinic, one health centre and two clinics. SCMS participated and visited health facilities in Engela district. Next steps include data analysis and report compilation with a final technical report expected in March 2013.

Contributed by Tuitsi Katungire (Senior Technical Advisor/SIAPS - also supporting SCMS)

Improving surveillance of the safety of ARV and TB medications in the community

SIAPS is supporting collaboration with Community Based organisations in reporting adverse drug reactions (ADRs) encountered by TB/HIV patients. Project Hope, a USAID funded organisation that is actively involved in the Direct Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) for TB patients is collaborating with SIAPS in having their field-based TB-DOTS promoters trained to be able to document and report ADRs experienced by the patients whom they supervise and visit in their homes.

This initiative is a means of extending into the community the surveillance and promotion of medication safety particularly among TB/HIV co-infected patients. In November 2012, 35 TB-DOTS field-based promoters were trained from the Oshana and Oshikoto regions. The ADR data submitted by the volunteers will provide information on the impact and extent to which the ADRs experienced by the TB/HIV patients potentially affect adherence to chronic medication and also on anticipated treatment outcomes.

This intervention follows a series of meetings between the Ministry’s Therapeutics Information and Pharmacovigilance Center (TIPC), SIAPS, Project Hope and consultations with the National TB and Leprosy Program. These stakeholders agreed on the need for a short training of the Project Hope supported TB-DOTS field promoters on the basics of pharmacovigilance and their role in monitoring, documenting and reporting the ADRs.

Contributed by: Chris Ntege and Francis Kaleemera (Senior Technical Advisors/SIAPS)