



Improved Monitoring of Patients and ARVs with the EDT

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, HIV prevalence is estimated at 2.53 percent of the population, or over 1,518,000 people (PNLS 2011). Medicine follow-up for a patient with HIV and AIDS is rarely kept up to date, and when it is, the treatment provider cannot easily access the data, making it difficult to monitor patient care and collect monitoring data that are, nonetheless, essential for the decision making required for case management. The General Referral Hospital of Kinshasa is no exception to this challenge.

Funded by the US Agency for International Development, the Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program, which supports the Ministry of Public Health, has targeted inclusion of a pilot project to test the Electronic Dispensing Tool (EDT) to respond to this weakness in data management at three antiretroviral (ARV) treatment sites: the General Referral Hospital of Kinshasa, the Kokolo military hospital, and the Kingasani hospital. Staff responsible for dispensing ARV medicines from the three hospitals selected as pilot sites were trained on using the EDT before receiving an information technology kit from the SIAPS Program, which provides ongoing technical support to ensure better handling of the tool.

After one year of using the tool, the General Referral Hospital of Kinshasa has seen progress in managing ARVs and patient follow-up because of the EDT, as reflected in this statement by pharmacist **Sylvain Mbwama**:

“The EDT enables us to correctly manage ARV stock inventories, the history of ARV dispensing, record-keeping for people living with HIV, and monitoring of patients lost to follow-up, all resulting in saving time on writing our reports. We can monitor a patient’s basic profile and his or her drug history and produce the information needed to calculate medicine needs and to make effective management decisions. Certainly, we had some problems handling the IT tool at first, but now we are making progress, and the work is done with satisfaction at the General Reference Hospital of Kinshasa. We thank SIAPS.”

Implemented by Management Sciences for Health, the SIAPS program works in 80 health zones of the Ministry of Public Health that are targeted by the Integrated Health Project to ensure the availability of high-quality pharmaceutical commodities and effective pharmacy services to achieve the desired health outcomes.

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December 2013