

Monitoring Tool Helps Track Availability of Medicines in Limpopo

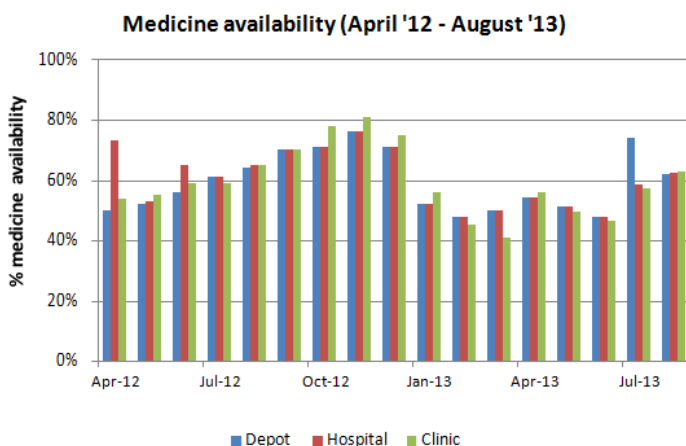
The Provincial Department of Health in Limpopo has successfully implemented an improved stock availability monitoring tool developed with technical support from the USAID-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program. The tool is used for routine monitoring of stock availability at the pharmaceutical depot, hospitals and clinics. Using the tool routinely alerts both the province and the National Department of Health (NDoH) of stock movements and shortages.

The monitoring and reporting process aided by the tool is helping to support the province in the drive to ensure uninterrupted availability of medicines within public health facilities. An important feature of the improved tool, which was piloted in July 2012, is that stock is deemed to be available if there is sufficient stock at a facility for one week based on average weekly usage. In contrast, before the tool was introduced, stock was considered to be available if there was a positive usable balance. This approach resulted in a skewed or inflated picture of medicine availability.

Happy Mohale, Manager Regulatory Affairs and Quality Assurance for Pharmaceutical Services in Limpopo, noted the tool's usefulness in assisting them to gather data on a regular basis to determine percentage stock availability per facility, district, and for the province as a whole. She reported that the tool was helping to identify which items were out of stock at some facilities and across the province.

“Tracking and monitoring of overstocking in some facilities has been made simpler since the introduction of the tool—excess stock can be redistributed to needy facilities thereby preventing expiry of stock,” said Ms. Mohale.

To make the reporting process easier for health care personnel, a user friendly standard operating procedure has been developed. This ensures that facilities are able to follow same processes on reporting and interpretation of stock availability and report percentage stock availability on a weekly basis. All products on the Limpopo Code List which are classified as vital or essential are tracked in this way.



A clear picture of the status of the availability of these important products is available as depicted in the graph. SIAPS is supporting numerous other interventions to improve overall medicine availability both at the depot and facilities in the province.



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