



## **COMMUNITY HEALTH AND INFORMATION NETWORK – (CHAIN)**

***Advocacy on Patient Safety with a focus on Substandard and  
Counterfeit medicines***

**REPORT**

**2015/2016**



## **With support from Pfizer**

### **1.0. Introduction**

Community Health And Information Network (CHAIN) with support from Pfizer continues to play its role in promoting patient safety at community, national and International level. The project addresses patient safety issues which include substandard and counterfeit medical products, unsafe use of medicines, self-medication, injection safety, hand washing/hand hygiene, Hospital Acquired Infections (HAIs) and Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs).

Patients continue to be harmed or loose lives due to the above named issues. The situation is made worse by low health literacy, leaky supply chains, weak laws, poorly trained health workers, poor patient involvement, poor health worker, patient relationship among others.

In May 2015 CHAIN received a grant of \$ 10,000 to support advocacy activities on the issues of access to medicines, the fight against counterfeit medicines and the promotion of patient safety and patient centered healthcare.

The activities included raising awareness among people living with HIV , Village Health Teams(VHTs), Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC ) and their guardians and the general public on issues of substandard and counterfeit medicines and patient safety among others. Training of Community Safe Medicines Advocates (CSMAs) and patient safety advocates. CHAIN also engaged key stakeholders including WHO, Ministry of Health,

National Drug Authority, patient organisations, Healthcare professionals, drug store operators, and health facilities.

CHAIN's work on patient safety has enabled it participate in high level foras which include; sitting on WHO working groups for the Global Patient Safety Challenge –Medication Safety and Development of WHO Guidelines for the Prevention of Surgical Site Infections.

## **2.0. Project Objectives**

- Engage with key healthcare stakeholders including WHO, MoH Healthcare professionals/Associations to promote patient centered healthcare and patient safety.
- Work in collaboration with regulatory authorities e.g. National Drug Authority to raise public awareness on safety and quality of medicines.
- Empower civil society organizations/patient groups, healthcare professionals to fight counterfeit medicines in Uganda.
- Empower community safe medicines advocates through regular trainings on quality and safety of medicines among the grassroots communities.
- Engage the public through media campaigns to raise awareness on safe use of medicines.
- Empower People Living with HIV (PLWHIV) with knowledge on the quality and safety of medicines, adherence and Adverse Drug Reactions.
- Make a critical linkage with the *Pfizer Inc.* in a well coordinated approach that can raise political will to take

action on promoting access and addressing the issue of counterfeit medicines.

### 3.0 PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

#### 3.1 Project statistics

Number of people reached with information on substandard and counterfeit medical products and safe use of medicines	10+
Number of trainings and meetings organized for Village Health Teams(VHTs)	
Number of key stakeholder institutions engaged in dialogues aimed at mainstreaming patient centered healthcare and patient safety in national service delivery	
Number of healthcare professionals trained	10
Number of Patient organization leaders sensitized on issues of patient safety including counterfeit and substandard medicines and injection safety	10
Number of meetings CHAIN participated in to advocate for integrating patient safety into healthcare delivery system at High level Health Policy decision making bodies at the MOH e.g. national Quality	

Improvement committee and Technical working group on supervision monitoring research and evaluation.	
Number of Media engagements/activities	
Number of patients reached with information about injection safety and safe use of medicines and encouraged to always seek medical attention from qualified health workers.	4500+
Number of school going children and their teachers reached with hand washing and medication safety information in Kampala, Mbale and Kiboga district.	00
Materials printed and distributed in schools and general public	00
Number of young patient safety advocates trained at Infectious Disease Institute(IDI)	
Number of people who attended the patient safety workshop	
Number of people who attended a meeting for patient safety advocates, safe medicines advocates and patient leaders to discuss patient safety issues in the healthcare systems organized in partnership with National Drug Authority (NDA).	

## **4.0. Activities**

### **4.1. Patient safety workshop**

CHAIN in partnership with Ministry of Health (Quality Assurance, National Disease Control, Clinical Services and AIDS Control programme) , WHO, National Drug Authority, AFROSAFE and Uganda Alliance of patients Organizations (UAPO) organized a 3 day patient safety workshop . It was aimed at providing an opportunity to prioritize patient safety concerns and issues in Uganda and to train and orient future advocates of patient safety who would work collaboratively and effectively with healthcare professional and policy makers to improve patient safety.

The workshop brought together officials from ministry of health, officials from WHO, clinicians, pharmacists, media, patient representatives and social workers.



The issues discussed included Quality & safety of medicines, Injection safety, error reporting, Hospital Acquired Infections (HAIs), the re-use of single use medical devices and Radiation protection in medicine and national health system framework. The role of medical ethics in improving patient safety and quality was also discussed with participants sharing experiences where healthcare professionals behaved unethically. Participants discussed their experiences with healthcare system where they had been harmed or have had near miss events. The need to involve patients and their families in their care was emphasized as well as integrating patient safety in service delivery.

**Key outcomes:**

- Raised awareness about patient safety and the need for mainstreaming it into National Healthcare Delivery System.
- Shared knowledge, experiences of patients harm and near miss events in the process of receiving care.
- Formed partnerships between patients, health-care professionals , policy makers and healthcare leaders
- Trained and oriented individuals in advocacy skills for patient safety

**5.0. International level advocacy**

In June 2015 Regina Kamoga from CHAIN Uganda and Jolanta Blinska of Patients Safety Foundation collaborated and organized events in Poland to increase awareness of patient safety in healthcare systems and among school children between 5-10years. A session on how to prepare tailor made patient safety materials and how to improve health worker/patient relationship. Other issues discussed included models of patient safety in hospitals, formation of National Networks of Patient Safety Leaders/advocates to spear head patient safety campaigns in Uganda and Poland.

Regina and Jolanta also made a hand washing demonstration to promote hand hygiene at a school in Lodz. A quiz was conducted to determine and increase the level of

knowledge on hand washing. The children participated fully and acquired knowledge.

## **6.0. Injection safety campaign**

Unsafe injections including reuse of disposable syringe is very common in developing countries and Uganda is no exception. Healthcare providers unnecessarily prescribe injections to patients suggesting that patients request for injections. Injections are overused in health centres because patients prefer them, believing that they provide quick relief, and perceive them as a therapeutic norm and standard practice. Patients are not aware of the risks associated with overuse and reusing of injection equipment.

To address this issue CHAIN;

- Raised awareness on the elimination of unsafe medical injections and patients attitudes
- Raised awareness about appropriate disposal of all injection waste



*Regina talking to health workers at a local health facility about injection safety*



*VHTs attending a workshop organized by CHAIN on safe medicine use and injection safety*

## **7.0. Promoting Hand hygiene to reduce infections**

According to 2011 UBOS survey, only 28% of Ugandans have access to hand washing facilities. This is mainly due to inadequate knowledge on the importance of proper hand washing and lack of proper hand washing facilities.

CHAIN with support from Pfizer worked with schools, Makerere University College of health Sciences students and communities to increase proper hand washing practices through innovative technology to reduce incidences of infectious diseases in Kampala, Kiboga and Mbale districts. Over 10,000 children were reached.

Key outcomes:

- Improved hand hygiene among children in targeted schools
- Hand washing culture developed
- Hand-washing integrated into preexisting hygiene education
- Construction tippy taps in targeted schools
- Imparted knowledge on construction of tippy taps to local leaders, teachers and school children

## **8.0. Awareness raising on Medication safety in Eastern Uganda- Mbale district.**

A rural community in Mbale district was sensitization about safe use of medicines and counterfeit medicines. In a discussion on safe use of medicines community members shared their main source of medicine from hawkers, markets, buses and hawkers. They also admitted not using their medicine correctly for instance they do not understand dosage instructions such as 2x 3 , there were differing views as to what this means. Many do not finish their dosage; they discontinue use when they feel better and keep the rest for future use. Sharing was also a common practice.

60 community members were reached with information on how to take their medication correctly e.g. to always seek healthcare from qualified health workers, follow doctor's instruction; not to treat themselves (self medication) as this is

dangerous and may cause unwanted health outcomes. They were also advised to always consult their doctor/pharmacist before using any medicine or herbs and how to store it.



*Participants listening attentively*

## **9.0. Patient involvement in pharmacovigilance**

A meeting for patient safety advocates, safe medicines advocates and patient leaders was organized by CHAIN in partnership with NDA to identify critical issues affecting patients.



**Dr. Frederick Nakwagala making a presentation on patient medical information**

## **10.0. MOVING FORWARD**

- Sustain advocacy for patient safety and become a voice to the voiceless on patient safety issues
- Diversify training of media and other health workers on patient safety
- Sustained frequent communication and open discussion between healthcare providers and patients
- Open discussion and educating communities is needed to increase awareness on patient safety issues.

- The media can play a vital role in educating communities about risks of unsafe medicines and substandard and counterfeit medicines.