

# **Challenges of Supervising Community Health Service Providers: A Context Analysis of the Kenyan Community Health Strategy**

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## **Background:**

Supervision is widely presented in policies and literature as an important factor for ensuring quality of providers output. The Kenyan Community Health Strategy (CHS) is a program through which the government provides guidelines for provision and supervision of community health services. It states that Community Health Committees (CHC) and Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) are designated supervisors of volunteer community health workers (CHWs) while District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) are CHEWs' supervisors. We present findings of challenges faced in supervision of community health providers in the current Kenyan CHS.

## **Methods:**

We collected data through a qualitative study in an urban slum and a rural district of Kenya. We purposefully selected 179 participants and conducted 10 FGDs and 40 IDIs. Digitally recorded data was transcribed and translated where applicable. Data was coded and analyzed using Nvivo10.

## **Results:**

Supervision emerged as a factor motivating CHWs and CHEWs in addition to the positive health changes brought about by the CHS. Health system challenges hindering effective and consistent supervision were: lack of clear guidelines; inadequate transportation mechanisms and high workload especially for CHEWs who had dual roles as health facility and community based providers. There was emphasis on reporting tools in CHS program but providers' performance measurement tools were generally lacking except in programs with NGOs involvement. It was

unclear who directly supervised CHWs between the CHEWs and CHCs. CHEWs did not adequately supervise community engagement especially in relation to HIV and sexual health services provided by CHWs.

**Discussion/ Conclusion:**

Our findings underscore the need for development and operationalization of supervision guidelines and performance appraisal tools to ensure adequate and standardized supervision in CHS. The supervisors in turn need support from CHS coordinators through continuous capacity building and adequate planning for resources which should also aim at relieving CHEWs of the dual roles.