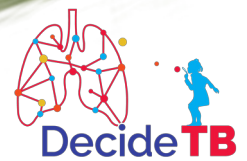


DECIDE TB NEWSLETTER N°3

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Improve the diagnosis of tuberculosis in children with treatment decision algorithms



EDITORIAL

As the National Tuberculosis (TB) Programs in Mozambique and Zambia continue deploying the Treatment Decision Algorithms (TDAs) in new study districts and the Decide TB trial continues data collection, TB programs in project countries and the overall Global Health community are facing a major crisis due to funding freeze on American international aid including the termination of USAID programs.

The Decide-TB project is directly impacted through the cessation of collaborative activities contributing to decentralized TB services and procurement challenges to support NTP activities in both countries.

Frontline health care workers are already experiencing major challenges in sustaining delivery of quality care, and the worst epidemiological predictions and negative public health impact on TB epidemics, morbidity and mortality in children & adults are expected.

As we commemorate World TB Day on March 24, it is more than ever time to claim, together with the global TB community that: **“Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver!”**

Dr Chishala CHABALA

Dr Olivier MARCY

 decide-tb.com

FUNDER

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We **commit** to the global fight against TB and the aim of ending TB by turning global pledges into action, engineering Treatment Decision Algorithms (TDAs) into healthcare systems at primary and district levels of care, as a key strategic tool to improve childhood TB diagnosis & management of high TB burdens countries.

We **invest** in sustainable solutions, training healthcare professionals, developing tools to enhance childhood TB detection at primary and district levels of care and to support better treatment decisions.

We **deliver** transformative research findings on TDAs, both on the impact of TDAs and the best strategies to integrate TDAs in routine care, collaborating with communities, policymakers, and researchers to maximize the transfer of evidence into policies and ensure a long-term impact.

Through collaboration and innovation, **together, we can end TB!**

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Raising community awareness about childhood TB



Community Mobilization, Sikongo, Zambia

Decide-TB is actively engaging communities to raise awareness about childhood TB and improve access to care. As part of this effort, community outreach and mobilization activities have been launched in districts involved in the project. The first community actions took place in Chirundu District from November 18 to 29, 2024 in communities around the seven Decide-TB selected facilities and gathered about 50 to 100 people each time.

Engaging community leaders and reaching families

The activities consisted of meetings with community leaders, including church representatives, market vendors, school officials, nurses, neighborhood leaders, farmers, members of the community including mothers and care givers with the aim of relaying information within their communities.

The interactive sessions involved presentations of childhood TB messages, open discussions, role-playing and sharing real life stories by TB survivors and families affected by TB.

During Child Health Week, we had the opportunity to discuss with mothers and caregivers on the importance of TB vaccination and TB screening in children with weight loss or poor weight gain.

Radio shows

Community radio discussion programme with experts from the Ministry of Health (provincial and district health promotion officer, district TB coordinators and district hospital TB focal point person) with the support of national TB program, was conducted in local languages with the aim of reaching a wider audience in two districts (Chirundu & Luanshya).

Topics covered

Key messages focused on understanding childhood TB, recognizing symptoms early for prompt treatment, using Treatment Decision Algorithms (TDAs) for childhood TB diagnosis, TB treatment and adherence.

Continuous support for the use of TDAs

Within pilot districts, NTPs have integrated TDAs as a key area of focus within their regular routine support supervision and clinical mentoring visits. This allows the rapid identification of bottlenecks in the field, and problem solving together with the front-line Health Care Workers.

Clinical Mentoring

Clinical officers, nurses and pediatricians are continuously supported to adequately use TDAs in the management of children with presumptive TB. Trained mentors (provincial hospital or national hospital pediatricians) evaluate and reinforce the healthcare workers' clinical skills, from TB screening to TB diagnosis, including in evaluating the severity of TB diseases and interpreting CXR images.

Support supervision

Trained supervisors observe practices and workflows in each facility piloting the TDAs, review TB data on registers and tablets and identify refresher training needs. Findings are discussed and recommendations are acted together with facility management.



Supervision, Buzi, Mozambique

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