

# MANAGEMENT OF SICK CHILDREN BY COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

INTERVENTION MODELS AND PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

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## CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	iii
<b>Glossary</b> .....	iv
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	1
Intervention models.....	1
Operational aspects.....	2
Support, sustainability and scale.....	2
Findings and recommendations.....	2
<b>2 Background</b> .....	2
<b>3 Methods</b> .....	3
<b>4 Intervention models</b> .....	5
Intervention Model 1. CHW basic management and verbal referral.....	5
Intervention Model 2. CHW basic management and facilitated referral.....	7
Intervention Model 3. CHW-directed fever management.....	8
Intervention Model 4. Family-directed fever management.....	10
Intervention Model 5. CHW malaria management and surveillance.....	11
Intervention Model 6. CHW pneumonia case management.....	11
Intervention Model 7. CHW integrated multiple disease case management.....	13
Discussion.....	14
<b>5 Operational considerations</b> .....	15
Performance of CHWs.....	16
Retention of qualified CHWs.....	20
Use of CHW services.....	22
Drug supply.....	23
Appropriate use of antimicrobials.....	25
<b>6 Support, sustainability and scale of programmes using community health workers</b> .....	27
Programme support.....	27
Sustainability of CHW programmes.....	29
CHW programme scale.....	31
<b>7 Findings and recommendations</b> .....	32
Integrated management of sick children by community health workers at the community level.....	32
Operational considerations.....	36
Support, sustainability and scaling up of successful implementation models.....	38
<b>Annex A – WHO/UNICEF Joint Statement on Management of Pneumonia in Community Settings</b> .....	40

<b>Annex B - Further description, by intervention model, of selected programmes using community health workers</b>	45
Intervention Model 1 – Overview	45
Intervention Model 1 – BRAC nationwide shastho shebika programme	45
Intervention Model 1 – Community health agents programme, Ceará State, Brazil	46
Intervention Model 2 – Overview	47
Intervention Model 2 – CARE Peru Enlace and Redes programmes	47
Intervention Model 3 – Overview	49
Intervention Model 3 – Village drug kits, Bougouni, Mali	49
Intervention Model 3 – Homapak Programme, Uganda	50
Intervention Model 4 – Overview	52
Intervention Model 4 – Malaria Control Programme, Burkina Faso	52
Intervention Model 5 – Overview	53
Intervention Model 5 – Thailand Village Voluntary Malaria Collaborator Program	53
Intervention Model 6 – Overview	54
Intervention Model 6 – Nepal Community-Based ARI/CDD programme	54
Intervention Model 7 – Overview	56
Intervention Model 7 – Pakistan Lady Health Worker Programme	56
Intervention Model 7 – CARE Community Initiatives for Child Survival, Siaya, Kenya	57
<b>Annex C: Checklists to support recommendations</b>	60
Checklist 1. Possible forums in which to advocate integration of pneumonia and malaria management	60
Checklist 2. Suggested components to include in characterizations of referral	60
Checklist 3. Suggested components to include in programme characterizations	61
<b>References</b>	62
<b>Tables</b>	
Table 1. Overview of intervention models for case management of children with malaria or pneumonia outside of health facilities	1
Table 2. Classification of intervention models for case management of children with malaria or pneumonia outside of health facilities	5
Table 3. Documentation of intervention models for case management of children with malaria or pneumonia outside of health facilities	6
Table 4. Intervention Model 2: Description of facilitated referral in Peru and Honduras	48
Table 5. Intervention Models 3 and 4: Comparison of community health worker management of presumed malaria	50
Table 6. Intervention Model 5: Comparison of programmes using community management of malarial disease with microscopy verification	53
Table 7. Intervention Model 6: Comparison of programmes providing antibiotics to manage pneumonia in the community	55
Table 8. Intervention Model 7: Comparison of programmes providing antimalarials and antibiotics in the community	58
<b>Figures</b>	
Figure 1. Range of approaches to community-based treatment of malaria	8
<b>Boxes</b>	
Box 1. Local names for community-based health workers	2
Box 2. Definition of ‘facilitated referral’	8
Box 3. Community-based health information systems	20
Box 4. Bamako Initiative	25
Box 5. Cost of programmes using community health workers	32

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## GLOSSARY

<b>AIDS</b>	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>APROMSA</b>	Asociación de Promotores de Salud/Community health promoter association (Peru)
<b>ARI</b>	acute respiratory infections
<b>ARI/CDD</b>	acute respiratory infections/control of diarrhoeal disease
<b>ALRI</b>	acute lower respiratory infections
<b>BASICS</b>	Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival
<b>BRAC</b>	formerly the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, now known as 'BRAC'
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (United States)
<b>CHW</b>	community health worker
<b>CICSS</b>	Community Initiatives for Child Survival in Siaya (Kenya)
<b>CORE Group</b>	Child Survival Collaboration and Resources Group
<b>COMPROMSA</b>	Comité de Promotores de Salud/community health promoter committee (Peru)
<b>CNLP</b>	Centre National de Lutte contre le Paludisme/National Centre for Malaria Control (Burkina Faso)
<b>CQ</b>	chloroquine
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>IMCI</b>	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
<b>IPT</b>	intermittent presumptive treatment
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>ORS</b>	oral rehydration salts or oral rehydration solution
<b>ORT</b>	oral rehydration therapy
<b>SEARCH</b>	Society for Education, Action, and Research in Community Health
<b>SP</b>	sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (Fansidar®)
<b>TBA</b>	traditional birth attendant
<b>TDR</b>	WHO/UNICEF/World Bank Special Programme for Research and Training on Tropical Diseases
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# 1. INTRODUCTION

An estimated 10.6 million children under five years of age still die each year from preventable or treatable diseases. Many of these deaths are attributable to the conditions targeted by Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI): acute respiratory infections, malaria, diarrhoea, measles and malnutrition. A large proportion of these deaths could be prevented through early, appropriate and low-cost treatment of sick children in the home or community, with antibiotics, antimalarials or oral rehydration therapy.

This report examines approaches for the community management of sick children, specifically antimicrobial treatment, through the use of community health workers (CHWs) or their equivalent. It is based on an extensive review of literature, including peer-reviewed studies, reports, programme descriptions and programme evaluations. Individuals and programme managers from various institutions were interviewed, and pertinent documents were solicited.

Chapter 2 presents a brief background of the issues surrounding community treatment. Chapter 3 describes the methods used for the review. In Chapter 4, CHW programmes are classified according to the CHW's role in the management of sick children in the community, based on use of antimicrobials, method of disease classification and referral mechanisms. Chapter 5 then presents operational

considerations in CHW programming, such as CHW performance and retention, drug supply systems and the appropriate use of antimicrobials. Chapter 6 examines the support of programmes, and factors affecting sustainability and scaling up of programme operations. Chapter 7 presents findings of the report and recommendations for strengthening current programmes and policies, as well as needs for future technical and operations research. Annex A contains the WHO/UNICEF Joint Statement on Management of Pneumonia in Community Settings. Annex B outlines further details about selected CHW programmes that were reviewed in the process of preparing this document. Annex C contains checklists related to programmatic recommendations.

## Intervention models

CHW programmes that manage childhood illness in the community can be classified according to the following factors: use of antimicrobials, type of referral system, type of antimicrobial and use of systematic processes to classify sick children. The seven types of programmes considered are shown in Table 1 and discussed in further detail below. Programme case studies are presented extensively in Chapter 4 of the document and are examined with respect to the type of programmatic approach.

**Table 1. Overview of intervention models for case management of children with malaria or pneumonia outside of health facilities**

Number	Intervention model Title	Treatment with antimicrobials			Referral to nearest health facility: Verbal or facilitated
		CHW dispenses antimalarials	Family dispenses antimalarials	CHW dispenses antibiotics for ALRI	
Model 1	CHW basic management and verbal referral	No	No	No	Verbal
Model 2	CHW basic management and facilitated referral	No, may give initial treatment prior to referral	No	No, may give initial treatment prior to referral	Facilitated for all sick children needing an antimicrobial
Model 3	CHW-directed fever management	Yes	No	No	Verbal or facilitated
Model 4	Family-directed fever management	Family only or shared responsibility		No	Verbal
Model 5	CHW malaria management and surveillance	Yes	No	No	Verbal or facilitated
Model 6	CHW pneumonia case management	No	No	Yes	Verbal or facilitated
Model 7	CHW integrated multiple disease case management	Yes	No	Yes	Verbal or facilitated

## Operational aspects

This report also reviews operational components that can contribute to the effectiveness of treating sick children in the community: community health worker performance, retention of CHWs, use of CHW services, drug supply systems and appropriate drug use. The operational considerations are not reviewed exhaustively; rather, other documents that have analysed or reviewed these relevant operational aspects are referenced throughout the text.

## Support, sustainability and scale

Most CHW programmes rely on coordination and cooperation between many partners and stakeholders, and strong links between partners can improve the capacity of the programme. Yet the balance between the roles of each partner varies. Solid links with the community and the ministry of health can help foster more sustainable CHW programmes. The community (and community groups), non-governmental organizations and the ministry of health may all have unique roles in a CHW programme.

### Box 1. Local names for community-based health workers

Name	Country or area
Agente comunitario de salud	Peru
Agente comunitário de saúde	Brazil
Basic health worker	India
Community health volunteer	Various
Community health worker	Various
Colaborador voluntario	Latin America
Community drug distributor	Uganda
Female community health volunteer	Nepal
Kader	Indonesia
Lady health worker	Pakistan

## Findings and recommendations

The findings and recommendations are summarized in Chapter 7 of this report. A few key findings are highlighted here.

Despite stronger evidence supporting its effectiveness in lowering mortality, community-based treatment of pneumonia is less common than treatment of malaria or diarrhoea. This discrepancy is especially striking in Africa. A policy statement on pneumonia in the community emerged from this finding and is found in Annex A. The guidelines for treatment of malaria and pneumonia concurrently, especially outside of facilities, are outdated because of the emergence of co-morbidities (HIV) and the development of antimicrobial resistance. Many programmes promote 'home treatment' and 'community-based treatment' of malaria in Africa. There is no standardization of these terms; both phrases are usually ill-defined and the differences are blurred in much of the documentation.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The past few decades have witnessed large and sustained decreases in child mortality in most low- and middle-income countries. However, an estimated 10.6 million children under the age of five still die each year from preventable or treatable conditions, including malnutrition (1–2). Many of these deaths are attributable to the conditions targeted by Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI): acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, malaria, malnutrition and measles (1–4). A large proportion of these deaths could be prevented through early, appropriate and low-cost treatment of sick children in the home or community, with antibiotics, anti-malarials or oral rehydration therapy. Improvements in care at health facilities through IMCI and other initiatives are necessary but not sufficient. Children from the poorest families are significantly less likely

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