

ELECTRONIC INTEGRATED DISEASE SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE SYSTEM TOOLS FOR DISEASE SURVEILLANCE AT THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

Short Communication

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The Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI), a specialised technical arm of the Ministry of Health has been mandated to coordinate surveillance and disease intelligence, prepare for and manage health emergencies as well as feed policy and program management with evidence based information. Challenges in data collection, collation and analysis have been recognised as a factor in determining preparedness and responses to health emergencies.

Recognizing that electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (eIDSR), an application of electronic tools to the principles of IDSR to facilitate prevention, prediction, detection, and response is key to efficient disease intelligence and response to emergencies, Zambia has adopted eIDSR to improve data collection, collation, analysis and usability.

The African region in 2013, adopted an

eHealth resolution (AFR/RC60/R3) to address the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for health and health-related fields, including disease surveillance.

This strategy recommended the development of national policies, strategies, norms and appropriate governance mechanisms resulting in long-term strategic plans and frameworks for eHealth capacities in countries.

Further to that, the Government of the republic of Zambia has a vision to have a Smart Zambia, and buying into this vision while recognizing the weakness in disease intelligence and preparedness for responses, the ZNPHI with the support from partners have developed an electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response system (e-IDSR) for capturing disease surveillance data on notifiable diseases that will enhance its capacity to efficiently employ its mandate.

Going electronic will safeguard: near real-

time disease reporting, even if not confirmed; electronic laboratory reporting that enables laboratories to report cases to relevant health providers and personnel without transport delays; enable timely confirmation of unconfirmed cases; integration of multiple health information databases into a single repository; electronic messaging capabilities (mobile SMS, emails and messaging within the electronic IDSR (e-IDSR)). This enables the sharing of information efficiently with all levels of health professionals that have necessary access to the system and automatic aggregation to generate daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports. The electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response tool once rolled out through the country will completely change to a positive, the efficiency of disease intelligence, emergency response and policy direction on the health platform