

Assessing the implementation of the practical approach to lung health (PAL)

Implementation of the practical approach to lung health (PAL)

Objectives: at the end of the assessment, reviewers should comment on –

- the level of development and implementation of PAL as a strategy in the country;
- the quality of this implementation, including for respiratory diseases other than TB;
- the actions that need to be taken to improve the implementation of PAL.

Background:

PAL is a patient-centred approach to improving the quality of the diagnosis and treatment of common respiratory illnesses in a primary health-care setting. It seeks to standardize service delivery through the development and implementation of clinical guidelines and managerial support within the district health system. It is used to coordinate among different levels of health-care services and between TB care and control services and general health-care services.

PAL aims to improve the quality of care delivered to patients who seek attention for respiratory symptoms in primary health-care settings, and to improve the efficiency of the delivery of respiratory services within health systems, with a focus on the district health system. PAL is assumed to contribute to the strengthening of health-care systems.

Location: central unit, coordination unit at the intermediate health level, first-level health facilities, first-referral health facilities (such as TB clinics or district hospitals)

Staff to be interviewed: teams at the central level and intermediate health level, health workers at first-level health facilities and first-referral health facilities

Assessment

- a. Is there a focal person for PAL at the central level?
- b. Is PAL included in the national strategy to prevent and control TB?
- c. Is PAL included in the national strategic plan to prevent and control TB?
- d. Is PAL included in regional and provincial strategic plans to prevent and control TB?
- e. Are there national guidelines for PAL?

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- f. Is there training material for health workers who provide PAL services?
- g. Is there an adequate connection between the national guidelines for PAL and the national guidelines for TB care and control?
- h. Are the medicines specified in the PAL guidelines included in the national list of essential medicines?
- i. Are the PAL guidelines available at first-level health facilities and first-referral health facilities? Are they used by the health workers at the facilities? (This can be evaluated by looking at how clean the guidelines are.)
- j. In the facilities visited, how many health workers (and what percentage of them) have been trained to provide PAL services?
- k. Are peak flow meters, inhalation chambers, nebulization equipment and oxygen available at first-level health facilities and first-referral health facilities?
- l. Are chest radiography machines, spirometry, oximeters and TB-laboratory facilities available at first-referral health facilities?
- m. Are medicines for inhalation use accessible to respiratory patients in the health facilities?
- n. Is the health-management information system register available in both first-level and first-referral facilities? Is the national TB programme's information system available in both types of health facilities? Is a register of patients suspected to have TB available in both types of health facilities?
- o. Are patients with respiratory symptoms clearly identified in the health-management information system register? Are those with persistent respiratory symptoms clearly identified as suspected cases of TB in the register?
- p. Are there clear connections among the health-information management system register, the register of suspected cases of TB, TB laboratory registers and the TB treatment register?
- o. Do routine reports show:
 - i) the number of respiratory patients managed under the PAL protocol;
 - ii) the proportion of respiratory cases among all patients visiting the health facilities for any reason;
 - iii) the proportion of patients with persistent respiratory symptoms;
 - iv) the proportion of patients with persistent respiratory symptoms who were suspected of having TB;
 - v) the proportion of patients suspected to have TB who were screened for TB;
 - vi) the proportion of TB cases among the suspected cases who were

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screened for TB.

Indicators for: Assessing implementation of the practical approach to lung health (PAL)		
<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Calculation</i>	<i>Source of information</i>
Number and percentage of health workers trained to provide PAL services	Numerator: number of health workers trained in PAL in a specified geographical area Denominator: total number of health workers in the same area	Reports on PAL trainings, supervision reports, reports established at the intermediate level
Number and percentage of facilities providing PAL services	Numerator: number of health facilities providing PAL services in a specified geographical area Denominator: total number of health facilities in the same area	Reports on PAL implementation
Number and percentage of respiratory cases among outpatients at health facilities	Numerator: number of respiratory patients at health facilities providing outpatient services in a specified geographical area Denominator: total number of outpatients at the same health facilities	Health-information management system register
Number and percentage of respiratory cases among hospitalized patients	Numerator: number of respiratory patients hospitalized in a specified geographical area Denominator: total number of inpatients at the same hospitals	Hospital discharge register
Proportion of patients with persistent respiratory symptoms	Numerator: number of patients with persistent respiratory symptoms at specific health facilities Denominator: total number of respiratory patients at the same health facilities	Health-information management system register
Proportion of patients with persistent respiratory symptoms suspected of having	Numerator: number of patients suspected of having TB at specific health facilities	Health-information management system register, register of patients suspected to

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TB	Denominator: total number of patients with persistent respiratory symptoms at the same health facilities	have TB
Proportion of patients suspected to have TB who were screened for TB	Numerator: number of patients suspected to have TB who were screened for TB at specific health facilities Denominator: total number of patients suspected to have TB at the same health facilities	Register of patients suspected to have TB, TB laboratory registers
Proportion of TB cases among patients suspected to have TB who were screened for TB	Numerator: number of TB cases identified at specific health facilities Denominator: total number of patients suspected to have TB who were screened at the same health facilities	TB treatment register, TB laboratory registers
Number of patients with an asthma attack who were cared for in emergency rooms	Number of patients with an asthma attack who were cared for in emergency rooms at specific health facilities within a specified period of time (for example, during a quarter)	Emergency room register
Number of patients hospitalized for an exacerbation episode of chronic respiratory disease	Number of patients who were hospitalized for an exacerbation episode of chronic respiratory disease at specific hospitals within a specified period of time (for example, during a quarter)	Hospital discharge register

PAL, practical approach to lung health.