Background document 5.b

The A to Z in ensuring quality of a TB prevalence survey: current approaches and gaps to be addressed

The information produced from each survey can only be used with confidence if the quality of the survey has been ensured from the initial stages of protocol development all the way through the last stages of data analysis and reporting of survey results. Since its establishment the sub-group on prevalence surveys has been primarily providing support to all Prevalence Survey Global Focus countries in the form of: a) independent peer reviewing of survey material and tools, b) delivering technical workshops, c) organizing country missions offering technical assistance and d) developing international guidelines for best-practice methods to be used in these surveys.

A. Current approaches

1) **Survey design**: detailed and independent peer reviews of at least two versions of each survey protocol are performed by at least two technical agencies.
2) **Survey implementation**:
   - Lead technical agency monitors closely and offers support through regular country missions during survey implementation and ensures the contribution of other technical agencies from the sub-group, where necessary, according to required expertise.
   - Institutionalization of: a) country missions during early implementation of cluster observations and b) mid-term reviews with representation from multiple technical agencies and other survey investigators, for the early identification of mistakes/bottlenecks and their correction/resolution.
   - Country missions to observe model cluster operations by other country survey coordinators (e.g. Cambodia 2011).
3) Review of all laboratory positive survey cases by an independent expert committee for the confirmation of the final list of all survey TB cases.

B. Gaps to be addressed

1) **Data cleaning**: There is currently no independent review done on the protocol to be followed for the logical checks and cross-checks of variables in the survey database, to produce as reliable and complete survey database as possible.
2) **Data analysis**: There is currently no independent (other than the lead technical agency) review done of the analytical methods used to produce the main survey results. The current best-practice methods are complicated and statistically demanding, they should only be attempted by people with the appropriate expertise and experience. The appropriate use of analytical methods could have a major impact in survey results in settings where the amount of missing data is large, participation rate low and the age and sex distribution of survey participants different to that of the national population.
3) **Reporting of results**: There is currently little input provided to the production of standardized reports presenting survey results.