STRENGTHENING ANALYSIS AND USE OF ROUTINE FACILITY DATA FOR MATERNAL, NEWBORN, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Data communication products for MNCAH
Objectives of the session

- Review types and formats for communicating data
- Provide tips for thinking through and improving the communication of data

Explicit knowledge =
- Tangible
- Visible
- Public
- Can be accessed by third persons
- Once shared, it belongs to everyone
- Can be seen “above the water”

Tacit knowledge =
- Intangible
- Invisible
- Private
- Can be accessed on only a first-person basis
- Hidden “under water”

Image from: World Health Organization

Data communication products for MNCAH
Communicating health information

- At present, many health information systems are “data-rich” but “information-poor”

- The purpose of a health information system is not just to generate high-quality data and hope that it will be used, but to convert that data into credible and compelling evidence that informs local health system decision-making

- Only after data have been compiled, processed, analyzed and interpreted do they produce usable information

- Effective products and mechanisms for communication of information are required

Adapted content of original slide from the World Health Organization.
Planning for development of a data communication product

Think through what you want to communicate and how the information can best be conveyed.

**What is the purpose of the data communication product you want to develop?**

- Is the product intended to help in MNCAH programme planning, review or evaluation? Will the product be used to support a request for resources? Will the product be used to advocate for policy change?

**Who is the target audience?**

- Do they have specific interests or communication needs?
- Are they experts in the subject matter (i.e. MNCAH programme manager) or does the information need to be “translated” to less technical terms?
- What is the health/data literacy or literacy of the target audience?
- How frequently should they receive the data communication product?

**How will you disseminate the data communication product?**

- Will the product be available only online? Will a paper-based (or downloadable) version be available?
- How can you best reach the target audience?

**Can you assess the use of the product?**

- If a web product, are there analytics on how often it is being accessed?
- Can you gather feedback on what could be improved in the product?

Examples of data communication products

- Fact sheets and infographics
- Dashboards
- Policy briefs
- Country profiles
- Barometers/monitors
- Reports
- Videos
- Press release
- Brochure
- Etc.
Spotlight on policy briefs

What is a policy brief?
• Concise summary of information, which outline reasons for choosing a particular policy option or action path in a current policy discuss or concern
• Can be an advocacy document aiming at bringing about desired action on a particular issue
• Helps to inform stakeholder deliberation/policy dialogues
• Often recommended as a key tool for communicating research findings to policy actors

How are policy briefs typically structured?

Title
• Should be descriptive and relevant to catch attention of the readers

Executive summary
• Short summary (~150 words) of the purpose of the brief and its recommendations, including the intended audience
• Aims to interest readers in reading the whole brief

Background and context
• Include facts needed to understand the context of the problem
• Aims to convince the reader of the necessity of policy action

Key messages
• A few (no more than 4-5) succinct messages summarizing the most important findings

Policy recommendations
• Explain proposed recommendations and concrete steps to address the issue

Summary of findings
• Brief summarizing the findings could be included

Adapted content of original slide from: World Health Organization
Importance and caveats of using photos and narrative examples in communication

Strengths
• Using photos, quotes or individual examples in reports can help to:
  • Convey the impact of a health problem in a personal way
  • Shift perspective between clinical practice and public health
  • Ground data/information in realities of human experience and varying contexts
  • Remind ourselves that summarized quantitative figures likely represent people
  • Draw in audience through relatable situations or personal connections

Caveats
• While quotes and verbatim examples can help to connect an audience to the content, one must be careful to not cherry-pick examples or take quotes out of context
• Photos should be attributed to an ethical source that has asked for permission to publish images of the person(s) and maintains the dignity of the subjects
• Including quotes does not “prove” that your findings/conclusions are correct
• Quotes should be selected carefully and used sparingly
• Summarizing verbatim examples can help to improve understanding where necessary

“Without qualitative enquiry, it is difficult to explain how individuals interpret health and illness in their everyday lives, or to understand the complex workings of the social, cultural and institutional systems that are central to our health and wellbeing.”


Content referenced from:
Key tips for data communication products (1/2)

• On the cover page of a report, always specify the month and year that the document was finalized.

• Specify data sources – not just the publication or the organization that provided the data, but the data source itself.

• Every table/figure needs a caption/title, labels, and source of data/information (including date) where applicable. Specify the period and the geographic area for which the statistics apply.

• For each table, graph or map, include narrative in the report that interprets the most important findings and discusses how indicators are defined and any specific limitations.

• If a table extends over more than one page of a report, always display the headers at the top of each column on each page of the report.

• If findings are to be projected on a screen (e.g. with a PowerPoint presentation), ensure text or numbers are in a font size big enough to be easily read.

Adapted slide from: World Health Organization Africa

Data communication products for MNCAH
Key tips for data communication products (2/2)

• Don’t forget to discuss the methods for estimating denominators. Include in the report a table of key denominators.

• With graphs presenting estimates (e.g. immunization), present recent survey estimates of the same indicator and, where possible, show the confidence interval of the survey estimate.

• In any report, discuss limitations of data, findings, methods, etc.
  – Where feasible, analyze data quality and discuss quantifiable findings about data quality.
    ◦ Where relevant, discuss, in particular, the completeness of hospital data, the completeness of private sector data and striking inconsistencies over time.
    ◦ When an indicator fluctuates by 10% or more from year to year the text should acknowledge the possibility that the change reflects a data quality problem.
Lessons for enhancing use of data communication products

A 2023 paper\(^1\) summarized the perspectives of 26 decision-makers working in health emergencies and humanitarian crises on what challenges they had trying to find and use research evidence.

Key findings from study\(^1\) on using research evidence summaries during emergencies

- Of those with no prior experience using evidence summaries, preferred features for an evidence summary included: “having a concise summary”, “including information about the research methods”, “having infographics”, and “including quality assessment of the evidence”.
- Decision-makers preferred evidence summaries with clear, succinct action points using simple language.
- Implementation considerations and contextual information were appreciated by decision-makers.
- Challenges faced by decision-makers in crisis settings when searching for research evidence: limited time, unstable internet connection, complicated websites, too much data that is not summarized in easy-to-use format.

How can these findings be applied to MNCAH improving use of data communication products?

- Ensure key messages are clearly communicated (i.e. don’t just present charts, but include concise interpretations as well).
- Include information on data collection or analysis methods, data quality issues.
- Use visualizations, tables or checklists to summarize complex information.
- Where relevant to your product, make clear, actionable recommendations or requests.
- Consider the context, setting, timing and implications of what is being communicated through your data product.
- Don’t assume your audience is an expert in MNCAH or health data - use clear, simple language.
- Provide direct web-links to specific data products.
- Ensure data communication products are disseminated through wide channels and can be easily found.

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