MONITORING AND EVALUATION: THE EFFECT OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT ON CRITICAL THINKING, DATA COLLECTION AND DATA REPORTING

Lalla-Edward S.T; Jaffer A & Venter W.D.F

BACKGROUND

- The Reproductive Health and HIV Research Unit (RHRU) of the Wits Health Consortium in South Africa is one of the top international recipients of PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) funding.
- In order to obtain and maintain this funding, the recipient is obligated to report to PEPFAR on a quarterly basis as well as submit semi annual and annual reports based on their specific indicators.
- The RHRU has further partnerships with the City of Johannesburg and the Department of Health. Reports and presentations are als compiled for these partners
- In RHRU, Johannesburg, the various project leaders submit monthly project statistics to the Monitoring and Evaluation team to facilitate compilation and submission of the required PEPFAR reports. Given the varied nature of project leader's backgrounds, experience and skills it was found that project reports and reporting standards differed.
- With increasing demands, the M&E team had considerably expanded, with each team member having key focus areas The M&E team members then isolated gaps and weak points within their focus areas of work.

AIM

To enhance critical thinking, data collection and data reporting within the HIV/AIDS programmes in the RHRU's HIV Management Cluster

OBJECTIVES

- To provide training and technical support
- To determine the effect of this training and technical support on programmes' outputs

METHODOLOGY

- It was decided that the most important strategy to strengthening M&E weaknesses is to facilitate understanding and provide capacity development
- An informal training needs analysis was done based on the current systems and structures. Trainings specific to these identified needs was carried out.
- Trainings comprised topics like fundamentals of M&E and critical thinking, through to basic excel, graphing, PowerPoint and report writing.
- The M&E team developed a resource guide to promote and create further understanding of the idea, need and applications of M&E.

RESULTS

- People whose primary focus was service delivery have now become more open and tolerant of M&E – beyond the required reporting.
- The importance of M&E and its impact and influence on public health is being acknowledged and appreciated.
- Project members are now more open to M&E activities and have taken ownership of the M&E responsibilities within their own projects.

AREA	OBSERVED IMPROVEMENTS
DATA COLLECTION	❑Data collected is congruent with project activities / objectives ❑Collected data is relevant, clean and meaningful
DATA MANAGEMENT	❑Data is stored in a reliable and systematic manner ❑Use of data bases e.g. MS Access
DATA ANALYSIS	❑Data is being manipulated to generate graphs, tables, data maps for use in reports and presentations
REPORTING	❑Critical narratives accompany graphs and tables for presentations and reports ❑Reports compiled are more scientifically aligned

CONCLUSIONS

- It is necessary to understand diversity and its impact on mindset. Experience, worldview and openness to learning are influencing factors to acquiring knowledge. One needs to bear this in mind when embarking on capacity developing ventures.
- There is still a great need internationally to build M&E skills. From the work done by the RHRU's M&E team it is evident that on going trainings, skills transfer and support can only improve M&E functions both in and out of the M&E environment.

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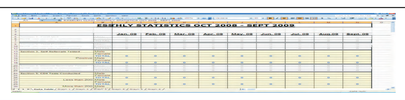
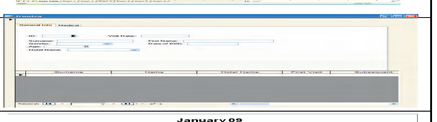
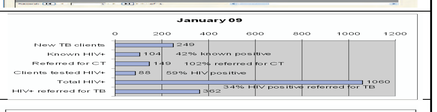
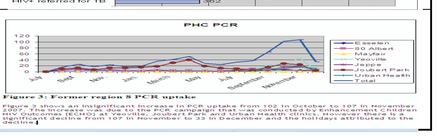
DATA COLLECTION	•Data collected is congruent with project activities / objectives •Collected data is relevant, clean and meaningful	
DATA MANAGEMENT	•Data is stored in a reliable and systematic manner •Use of data bases e.g. MS Access	
DATA ANALYSIS	•Data is being manipulated to generate graphs, tables, data maps for use in reports and presentations	
REPORTING	•Critical narratives accompany graphs and tables for presentations and reports •Reports compiled are more scientifically aligned	

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There is still a great need internationally to build M&E skills. From the work done by the RHRU's M&E team it is evident that on going trainings, skills transfer and support can only improve M&E functions both in and out of the M&E environment.

Greatness is more than potential. It is the execution of that potential. Beyond the raw talent. You need the appropriate training. You need the discipline. You need the inspiration. You need the drive.

Eric A. Burns

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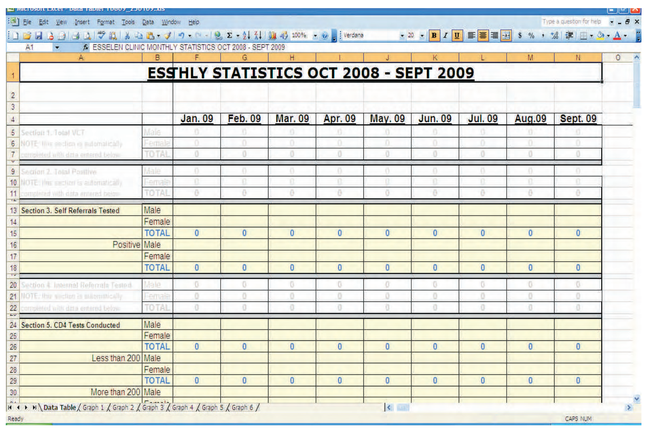

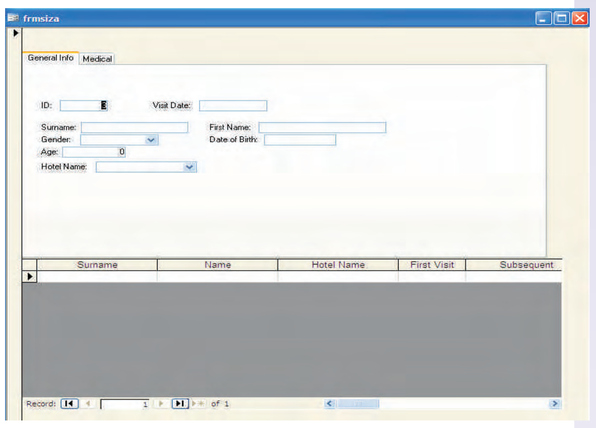

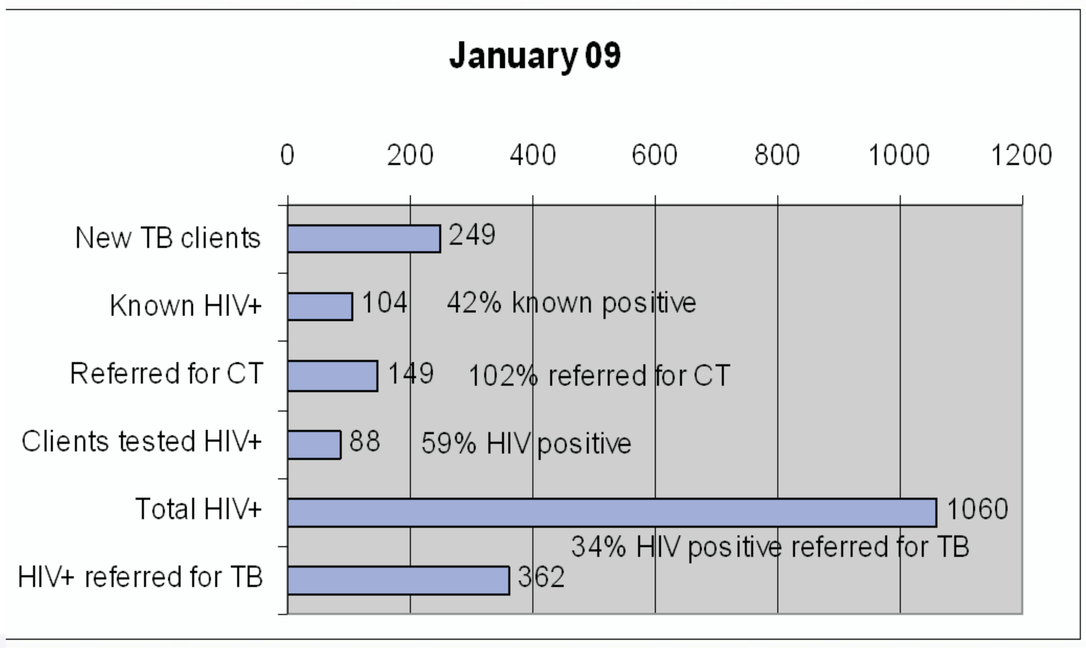

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RHRU Reproductive Health & HIV Research Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

World Health Organization

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg