

# A rapid assessment of knowledge, attitude and practices related to COVID-19 among community-oriented resource persons in Nigeria

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## Introduction

Integrated community case management (iCCM) is an equity-focused strategy that extends the reach of health services by providing timely and effective treatment of malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea to children under five in hard-to-reach (HTR) populations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF issued global technical guidance on infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols among community health workers that was then adapted by countries. This study assessed the effect of the pandemic on service provision, and evaluated the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of community-oriented resource persons (CORPs) in an existing iCCM programme in two states in Nigeria.

## Methods

- We randomly selected a total of 341 CORPs from two iCCM programmes in Kebbi and Niger states.
- From July to September 2021, we conducted a rapid assessment of their perception of commodities, clients' patronage, community awareness and KAP of CORPs regarding COVID-19.
- Trained data collectors carried out telephone interviews using structured questionnaires to establish appropriate KAP regarding COVID-19 among CORPs. Additional possible influencing factors were also analysed.
- We used SPSS® and Stata® to analyse the data.

## Results

- Overall, 86.7 percent of CORPs identified fever as a sign of COVID-19, while 83.6 percent and 75.1 percent, respectively, identified handwashing and social distancing as ways to prevent COVID-19 transmission.
- iCCM services continued unabated despite the pandemic, with 97.1 percent of CORPs providing services to children under five in HTR communities.
- During this time, 95.9 percent of caregivers continued to seek healthcare services from CORPs.
- CORPs adhered to COVID-19 IPC protocols: in the week preceding the survey, we found that
  - while attending to patients, 96.2 percent of CORPs always wore a face mask
  - before and after attending to patients, 97.4 percent of CORPs always washed their hands.
- Recently trained (two years or less) CORPs were significantly more knowledgeable on COVID-19 than peers who had received training three or more years prior (62.1 versus 16.7 percent,  $p < 0.001$ ).
- CORPs who had provided services for less than three years were more likely to adhere to COVID-19 protocols than those who had provided services for more than three years (92.8 percent versus 78.4 percent,  $p < 0.001$ ).

## Conclusion

CORPs demonstrated adequate knowledge, attitudes and practices of COVID-19 and reportedly continued to deliver iCCM-related services in their host communities, despite the pandemic. CORPs' background and demographic features have significant effects on their levels of KAP of COVID-19. Training of CORPs should be strongly supported by regular supportive supervision, which should be targeted and tailored to specific needs based on performance metrics. A limitation of the study is that results were largely based on responses from interviewees.

# Community-oriented resource persons demonstrated satisfactory knowledge, attitudes and practices for safe and effective delivery of iCCM services during COVID-19

## Supplementary visuals

Table 1: Knowledge of signs, symptoms and prevention of COVID-19

Variable	Kebbi (N = 160) n (%)	Niger (N = 125) n (%)	Total (N = 285) n (%)
Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 known (Multiple response)			
Fever	131 (81.9)	116 (92.8)	247 (86.7)
Ways to prevent COVID-19			
Social/physical distancing	128 (71.9)	128 (85.9)	256 (75.1)
Hand washing	141 (79.2)	144 (96.6)	285 (83.6)

Table 2: Perceptions of CORPs about the awareness, understanding and attitude of community members towards COVID-19

Variable	Kebbi (N=183) n (%)	Niger (N=158) n (%)	Total (N=341) n (%)
Caregivers continue to bring their children for treatment as usual, despite the pandemic			
Disagree	6 (0.3)	7 (4.4)	13 (3.9)
Not sure	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.3)
Agree	177 (96.7)	150 (94.9)	327 (95.9)

Table 3: Treatment, referral and COVID-19 safety-related practices of CORPs

Variable	Kebbi (N=183) n (%)	Niger (N=158) n (%)	Total (N=341) n (%)
Wore a face mask when in contact with patients in the last week			
Yes, always	178 (97.3)	150 (94.9)	328 (96.2)
Sometimes	3 (1.6)	1 (0.6)	4 (1.2)
Never	2 (1.1)	7 (4.4)	9 (2.6)
Washed hands before and after attending to a patient in the past week			
Yes, always	182 (99.5)	150 (94.9)	332 (97.4)
Sometimes	1 (0.5)	1 (0.6)	2 (0.6)
Never	0	7 (4.4)	7 (2.1)

Table 4: Association between CORPs' background characteristics and COVID-19 knowledge among all respondents

Variable	COVID-19 knowledge level			p-value
	Good (N=198) n(%)	Poor (N=143) n(%)	Total (N=341) n(%)	
Last trained on iCCM				$p < 0.001$
Two years or less	193 (62.1)	118 (37.9)	311 (100.0)	
Three years +	5 (16.7)	25 (83.3)	30 (100.0)	

Table 5: Association between CORPs' background characteristics and COVID-19-related practices

Variable	COVID-19 practice level			p-value
	Good (N=297) n(%)	Poor (N=44) n(%)	Total (N=341) n(%)	
Years of providing iCCM services in the community				$p < 0.001$
<3 years	192 (92.8)	15 (7.2)	207 (100.0)	
Three years +	105 (78.4)	29 (21.6)	134 (100.0)	

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