

Aslefech Demeke's story

ChARM data collection

Aslefech Demeke, from Shafina Health Post, took part in the ARIDA acceptability study, near her home. Having undertaken a two-day training in early May 2018, Aslefech began using the ChARM device in place of the ARI timer she had previously been using to aid her diagnosis of fast breathing pneumonia.

The ChARM device, produced by Philips, is an automated respiratory rate (RR) counter which uses an accelerometer to detect the child's breath movements. The community health worker (CHW) selects the age group of the child and when the device has finished counting, it shows the respiratory rate and a red or green light to indicate if the child has fast or normal breathing.

Prior to using the ChARM device, Aslefech felt the time taken to perform an assessment was too great. However, a month after starting using the ChARM device, Aslefech has felt a change in her routine. The automation of the ChARM device means she can now perform other tasks while the device does its work. She said a lot of time was previously spent counting, but the device now takes care of this. Aslefech says that using the ChARM device for diagnosing fast breathing pneumonia has become

part of her weekly routine at the health post, where many cases of diarrhea, fever, cough and other illnesses are seen. Using her registration book, the RR reading displayed by the device is recorded along with other information about the child she is assessing.

Aslefech did encounter some issues when introducing the device to caregivers who visited her health post. There was great concern from some mothers who felt the device would harm their child, but she took time to explain the device and demonstrate that this was not the case, and caregivers started trusting the device. She also commented that physically attaching the device to a child at the outset was a challenge, but added that her ability and confidence in doing this has increased throughout the month.

Overall, Aslefech said she would be happy if all health extension workers were trained on the device and equipped with it to serve their community. She believes that it does not require a high level of skills, and that other HEWs would be happy to use the device.