

# Identifying Mozambican community health workers' knowledge, attitudes and practices around COVID-19

Mitra Feldman,<sup>1</sup> Vera Lacey Krylova,<sup>2</sup> Poppy Farrow,<sup>2</sup> Laura Donovan,<sup>2</sup> Edson Zandamela,<sup>3</sup> Joaquim Rebelo,<sup>3</sup> Maria Rodrigues,<sup>3</sup> Antonio Bulo,<sup>3</sup> Carlos Ferraz,<sup>1</sup> Juan Romero Gonzalez,<sup>4</sup> Humberto Rodrigues,<sup>5</sup> Arantxa Roca-Feltzer,<sup>6</sup> and Kevin Baker.<sup>1,6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Independent consultant, Costa Rica

<sup>2</sup>Malaria Consortium

<sup>3</sup>Malaria Consortium, Mozambique

<sup>4</sup>Dimagi, South Africa

<sup>5</sup>Republic of Mozambique's Ministry of Health

<sup>6</sup>Department of Global Public Health, Karolinska Institute, Sweden

## Introduction

Healthcare workers are at the frontline of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response, yet there is a paucity of literature on their related knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP). While technical guidance surrounding COVID-19 is available to support community health workers in Mozambique — known locally as *agentes polivalentes elementares* (APEs) — communicating this information has been challenging due to restrictions on travel, face-to-face group meetings and training.

upSCALE, a digital health platform already in use by 1,213 APEs and 299 supervisors across three provinces in Mozambique, has been modified to support APEs to effectively manage COVID-19. Thus far, it has distributed pandemic-related SMS, training modules and a KAP survey. Through the latter, we hope to contribute to global and local efforts to better control the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Methods

- Cross-sectional study: ten-question KAP survey sent via SMS to all 1,065 active upSCALE APEs (June–August 2020).
- SMS were accompanied by simple videos demonstrating how to install and complete the survey using the upSCALE app.

## Results

- Response rate: 28 percent.
- Only a small proportion of respondents listed the correct COVID-19 symptoms, transmission routes and appropriate prevention measures — i.e. those present in national health education materials — (25, 16 and 39 percent, respectively).
- Misconceptions mainly related to transmission routes, high risk individuals and asymptomatic patients.
- Eighty-four percent of respondents said they followed all government prevention guidelines.

## Conclusion

This study shows that much more education is required to ensure APEs are adequately trained to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and that digital health platforms can be adapted to provide invaluable, real-time data to inform such responses. Currently, the survey's results are being used to support the rapid development and deployment of targeted COVID-19 awareness and education materials (i.e. SMS and seven training modules) for APEs. A follow-up KAP survey is planned for late November 2020, which should shed light on these materials' impact.

## Acknowledgements

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# Successful adaptation of a Mozambican digital health platform provided real-time data that is informing community health workers' COVID-19 practices

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## Supplementary visual

**Table 1: Assessment of malaria service delivery at health facilities**

Question	Options	Proportion selected (%)
What are the three main clinical symptoms of COVID-19? (Select three)	Conjunctivitis	45
	Diarrhoea	55
	Dry, persistent cough	90
	Fatigue	50
	Fever	90
	Headache	98
	Loss of speech or movement	10
	Shortness of breath	87
	<b>Correct answer: all three selected</b>	<b>25</b>
	Which of the below are at risk groups for COVID-19? (Select all that apply)	Children
Elderly individuals (aged >70)		97
Obese individuals		98
Pregnant women		3
Those with chronic illnesses		98
<b>Correct answer: all three selected</b>		<b>2</b>
Which of the following are methods of preventing infection with COVID-19? (Select all that apply)	Avoiding touching your face	92
	Covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing	97
	Practising physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel, staying away from large groups of people and keeping 1.5m apart from others	91
	Staying at home if you feel unwell	93
	Washing hands regularly with soap and water, or cleaning them with alcohol-based hand rub	92
	Wearing a face mask	92
	<b>Correct answer: all six selected</b>	<b>39</b>
	How is COVID-19 transmitted? (Select all that apply)	Contact with contaminated objects and surfaces
Direct contact with infected persons		90
Emptying latrines and handling of waste		83
Respiratory droplets		89
Through the air (airborne)		86
<b>Correct answer: all three selected</b>	<b>16</b>	
What is the minimum length of handwashing time recommended to effectively prevent onward transmission of COVID-19?	10 seconds	21
	20 seconds	16
	30 seconds	15
	40 seconds	45
A person infected with COVID-19 who does not show symptoms cannot spread the coronavirus.	False	57
	True	41
	Unsure	2
If you have symptoms of COVID-19, what measures should be taken? (Select all that apply)	Contact your local health facility or <i>Alô Vida</i> via telephone	48
	Get plenty of rest	28
	Monitor your symptoms regularly	30
	Self-isolate by staying at home for at least seven days	82
	Stay hydrated and take paracetamol	24
	Wear a face mask	52
	<b>Correct answer: all six selected</b>	<b>20</b>