



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Networks of communication during the multi-organizational response to the 2017 HPAI outbreak in Uganda: Improving coordination of response to disease outbreaks in resource limited settings

Steven Ssendagire^{1,2}, Lubwama Bernard², Doreen Tuhebwe¹, Freddie Ssengooba¹

¹Makerere University School of Public Health-Uganda

²Ministry of Health-Uganda

Introduction

When several organizations are responding to the same disease outbreak, their activities are more effective when implemented collaboratively. Such collaborative activities include situation awareness, decision making and resources mobilization. Common to all these activities is information exchange/communication. The effectiveness of a multi-organizational response to disease outbreaks is therefore associated with the quality of communication during the response. In Uganda, the quality of communication during multi-organizational responses to disease outbreaks has never been evaluated. Therefore, the current gaps and opportunities for improved communication during multi-organizational responses to disease outbreaks in Uganda are not known.

Objectives

The general objective was to improve communication during multi-organizational responses to disease outbreaks in resource limited settings. A case study of the response to the 2017 HPAI outbreak in Uganda was used to visualize the communication network, to determine the quality of the communication network and to identify gaps and opportunities for improved communication during future multi-organizational responses to disease outbreaks in Uganda.

Methods

Data was collected using In-Depth Interviews from consenting respondents from every organization that participated in the 2017 HPAI outbreak response. Respondents were sampled purposively using the snow balling technique until saturation was reached. Ethical approval was sought from MaKSPH IRB and UNCST. Data is currently being analysed using Social Network Analysis (SNA) and Content Analysis

Results*

Both formal and emergent networks of communication will be visualized. The quality of communication will be reported using Social Network Analysis metrics of Centrality, Connectedness, Betweenness and Tie-Strength. Social Network Analysis findings will be triangulated with thematic quotes. Findings will be shared with the Ministry of Health and its partners in outbreak management, through workshops/ conferences and manuscript publications in peer reviewed journals.

Recommendations

Policy and practice recommendations to improve communication during multi-organizational responses to disease outbreaks will be made and communicated to the respective stakeholders. Several engagement platforms within the Ministry of Health and its implementing partners will be used to facilitate implementation of the study recommendations.

*The study findings are being analyzed

For correspondence:

Steven Ssendagire,
Makerere University School of Public Health/
Ministry of Health- Uganda
email:stevenssendagire1@gmail.com
Tel:+256(0)700373285