

Enhancing Preparedness and Response to Disease Outbreaks through implementing a one health approach in Isiolo county, Kenya

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Abstract

This article delves into the realm of public health policies through the lens of One Health approach, through multi sectorial integration focusing on public health events related to climate change. Isiolo county serves as a pertinent backdrop, experiencing the emergence and re-emergence of diseases such as Covid-19, Rift Valley Fever (RVF), Yellow fever, and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), amidst climatic changes such as drought and erratic rainfall patterns. The region's challenging terrain, arid conditions, and socio-economic vulnerabilities with poverty index at 72.5% and GAM rate of 17.8%, agricultural adversities, leading to decreased crop yields and heightened livestock mortality rates. One Health approach is pivotal in addressing health challenges comprehensively and promoting holistic well-being. The approach aims to control diseases, ensure food safety, and enhance community resilience by integrating veterinary, Environment (rangeland health) and human health sectors, The operationalization is mixed-methods cross-sectional and longitudinal designed to reach vulnerable communities in remote areas. An effective strategy necessitates collaboration among veterinary, environmental, and human health sectors, exemplified by a multi-sectoral response effort initiated during the Rift Valley Fever outbreak in November 2020. This effort involved various stakeholders such as the National Zoonotic Disease Unit, HEAL partners, and government departments. Capacity building of key community actors and Health care workers emerged as a crucial strategy, with emphasis on hygiene practices, prevention of zoonotic diseases, weather forecasting, and environmental conservation. Result showcase significant progress, including improved disease surveillance and prevention efforts, with improved referrals for diagnosis and treatment. One Health integrated outreach programs address socio-economic challenges, reaching thousands of households for both human and animal health. The County has a comprehensive five-year one health strategic plan aligned to the County integrated development plan. Analysis highlights achievements such as the development of a training manual and MOU of the three directorates. Lesson learned underscores the importance of multisectoral coordination, collaboration, capacity building and effective communication for One Health operationalization.

Keywords: One Health, public health events, public health policies, collaboration, multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral coordination, One Health framework.