

# SUPERVISION, PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT, AND RECOGNITION STRATEGY: HOW SPARS IS IMPROVING HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS UGANDA



The Ministry of Health's Pharmacy Division and the Securing Ugandans' Right to Essential Medicines (SURE) program developed SPARS to increase health workers' ability to manage medicines through on-the-job training and support from a new cadre of Medicines Management Supervisors (MMS).

What distinguishes SPARS from previous supervision strategies is that the MMS visit facilities regularly and measure health facility progress using a standardized assessment tool with 25 indicators.

"Recognition" is a reward scheme for both MMS and health facilities that meet targets—MMS rewards range from t-shirts to net books, while facilities can receive stock books, dispensing trays, shelves, or community recognition events.

## THE MEDICINES MANAGEMENT TRAINING

MMS are district staff members who receive two weeks of training in stock and storage management, ordering and reporting, dispensing and prescribing, and how to measure performance in these areas. In addition, they undergo practical training in mentoring and supervisory skills. Upon passing an examination, they receive a certificate.

## TRAINING IN MOTORCYCLE RIDING



Motorcycles help MMS get to all the facilities they supervise, especially when rough roads are a problem. They are trained for five days in defensive riding, and those who pass receive a license.

### On the Road to Her Supervisory Visit

Previously only a handful of women could be seen riding motorcycles due to numerous barriers. The female MMS have shown that the motorcycle increases mobility and permits a flexible schedule.



*Now, I don't fear riding a motorcycle because I realized that no one can know I am a lady when I wear the helmet and the riding suit. Even the community has got used to seeing me riding my bike. It feels good and I make my supervision schedules without worrying about transport.*

## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AT THE HEALTH FACILITY

The MMS work with health workers by building their capacity in how to properly store medicines and track inventory, follow good dispensing and prescribing practices, place timely orders, and send in accurate reports.



*Our system for stock management has improved. We update our stock cards regularly and carry out a physical count every month, which we never used to do in the past. Our orders are based on consumption and we keep enough stock to last up to the next delivery*

—Stores Assistant, Koboko Health Center IV.

## TRACKING PROGRESS AND PROVIDING SUPPORT



MMS collect facility performance data by reviewing records during supervisory visits, observing practices, and talking to patients. They also answer questions and provide encouragement to the facility staff.

## NET BOOK TRAINING



MMS are trained to enter data using net books. Later, they transmit data electronically to an automated database system. The submitted data is verified, cleaned, analyzed at the central level, and shared through a district report. As part of the recognition plan, once the MMS reaches a certain performance level he or she takes ownership of the net book.

In addition, MMS can exchange vital information and discuss issues on management of essential medicines and health supplies through the *Uganda Ministry of Health Pharmacy Division Support Forum*, a new online discussion board. The forum also provides the Pharmacy Division with a way to instantly deliver messages to all stakeholders registered on the forum.

### Example of a Forum Exchange

at 12:22 pm on Sep 2, 2012

Hi to u all,

This is to remind all MMS and other HCW that most facilities have ACT 6 packaging due to expire in May 2013, please encourage all under your supervision to utilize it by dispensing it to the adults before that date. I think we have overstocks of this category due to the fact that VHTs are managing the under fives at the community level.

C.N

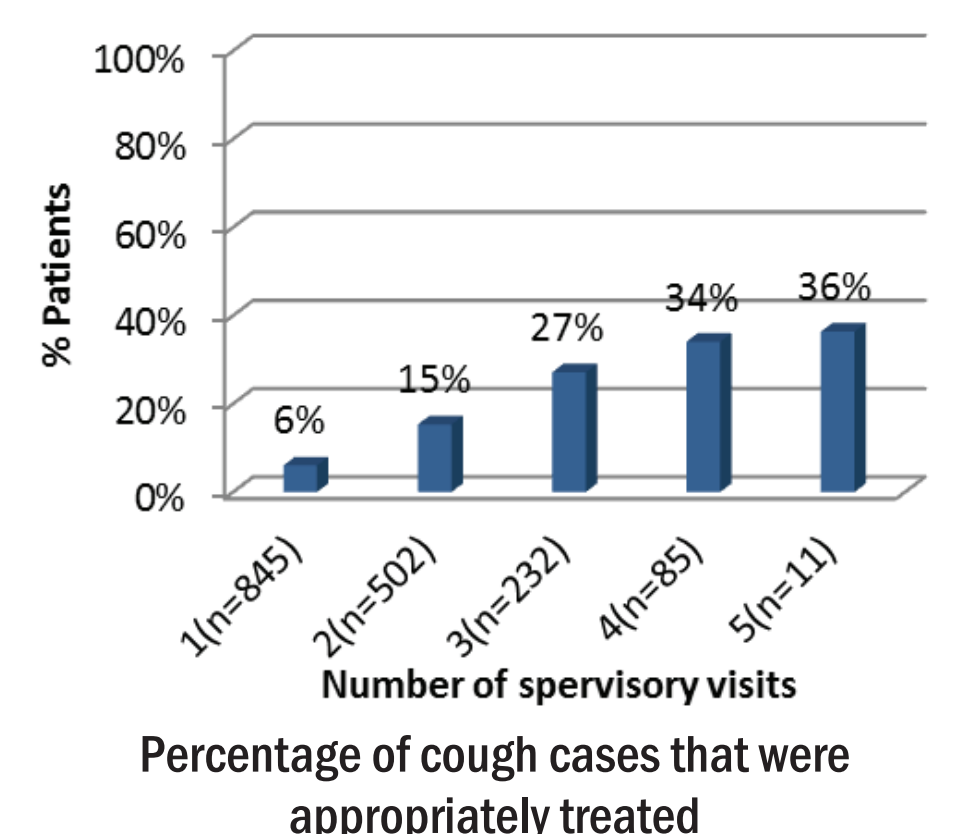
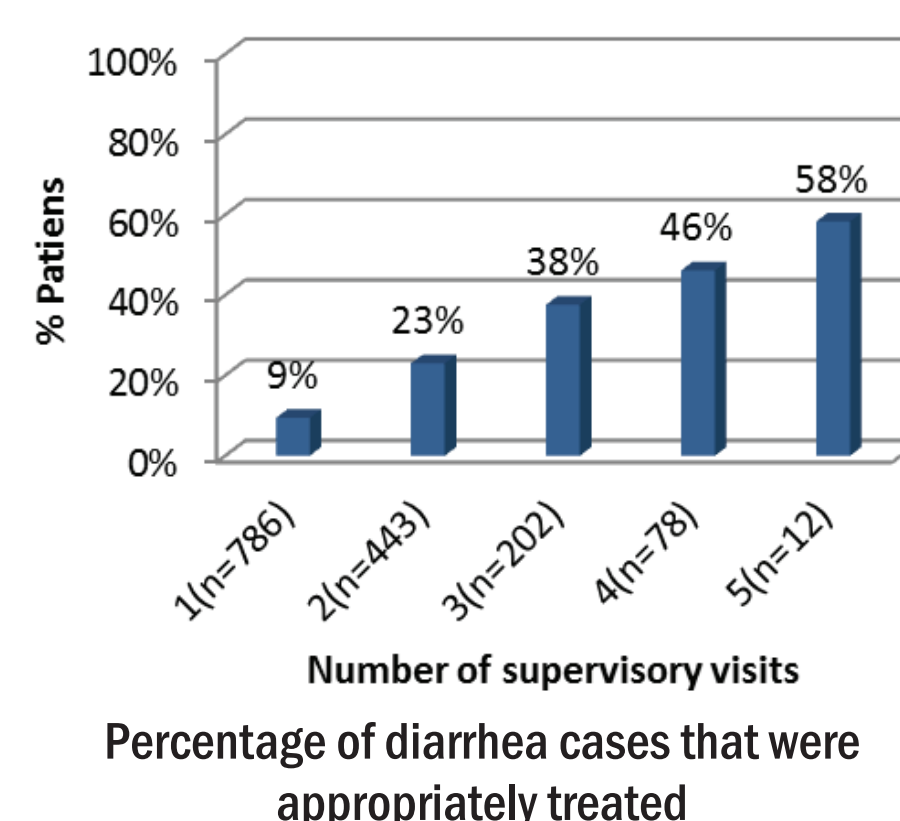
at 9:37 pm on Sep 2, 2012

C.N, you are very correct. I also have an over stock ACT-Yellow. I think your idea is a solution for my problems. Thanks.

P.O

## THE DISTRICT MEETINGS—PRESENTING THE RESULTS

The MMS present results of their facility assessments to district officials and other stakeholders every quarter. They review progress in the district overall and in individual health facilities, assess bottlenecks, and agree on the way forward. SURE and the Pharmacy Division help districts use the data to improve medicines management.



## SPARS MAKING AN IMPACT

SPARS has had a real impact on increasing appropriate treatment. After five supervisory visits, more than half of the diagnosed diarrhea cases were being treated with oral rehydration salts, zinc, vitamin A, and without an antibiotic. This compares with only 9% of the diarrhea cases that had been treated appropriately before the first supervisory visit. A similar increase was also noted for cough treatment, where more than one out of three patients was appropriately treated by the fourth and fifth visits, compared to one of 16 patients recorded during the first visit.



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