

## Integrated Risk Management in The Supply Chain of Essential Medicines in Zambia

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**Abstract :** Access to health care is a human right, which includes having timely access to affordable and quality essential medicines at the right place and in sufficient quantity. However, inefficient public sector supply chain management contributes to constant shortages of essential medicines at health facilities. Literature review involved a desktop study of published research studies and reports on risk management, supply chain management of essential medicines and their integration to increase the efficiency of the latter. The research was conducted on a sample population of offices under Ministry of Health Headquarters, Lusaka Provincial and District Offices, selected health facilities in Lusaka, Medical Stores Limited, Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority and Cooperating Partners. Individuals involved in study were selected judgmentally by their functions under selection and quantification, regulation, procurement, storage, distribution, quality assurance, and dispensing of essential medicines. Structured interviews and discussions were held with selected experts and self-administered questionnaires were distributed. Collected and analysed data of 35 returned and usable questionnaires from the 50 distributed. The highest prioritised risks were; inadequate and inconsistent fund disbursements, weak information management systems, weak quality management systems and insufficient resources (HR and infrastructure) among others. The results for this research can be used to increase the efficiency of the public sector supply chain of essential medicines and other pharmaceuticals. The results of the study showed that there is need to implement effective risk management systems by participating institutions and organisations to increase the efficiency of the entire supply chain in order to avoid and/or reduce shortages of essential medicines at health facilities.

**Keywords :** essential medicine, risk assessment, risk management, supply chain, supply chain risk management

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