

Evidence-Based Health System Strengthening in Urban India: Drawing Insights from Rapid Assessment Study

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Abstract : Background: Nearly half of India's population is expected to reside in urban areas by 2030. The extent to which India's health system can provide for this large and growing city-based population will determine the country's success in achieving universal health coverage and improved national health indices. National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) strive for improving access to primary health care in urban areas. Implementation of NUHM solicits sensitive, effective and sustainable strategies to strengthen the service delivery mechanisms. The Challenge Initiative for Healthy Cities (TCIHC) is working with the Government of India and three provincial states to develop effective service delivery mechanisms for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH) through a health systems approach for the urban poor. Method: A rapid assessment study was conceptualized and executed to generate evidence in order to address the challenges impeding in functioning of urban health facilities to deliver effective, efficient and equitable health care services in 7 cities spread across two project States viz. Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. Results: The findings of the assessment reflect: 1. The overall ecosystem pertaining to planning and management of public health interventions is not conducive. 2. The challenges regarding population dynamics like migration keeps on influencing the demand-supply-enabling environment triangle for both public and private service providers. 3. Lack of norms for planning and benchmark for service delivery further impedes urban health system as a whole. 4. Operationalization of primary level services have enough potential to meet the demand of slum dwellers at large. 5. Lack of policy driven strategies on how to integrate the NUHM with other thematic areas of Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (MNCH) and Family Planning (FP). 5. The inappropriate capacity building and acute shortage of Human Resources has huge implication on service provisioning and adherence to the service delivery protocols. Conclusion: The findings from rapid assessment are aimed to inform pertinent stakeholders to develop a multiyear city health action plan to strengthen the health systems in order to improve the efficacy of service delivery mechanism in urban settings.

Keywords : city health plan, health system, rapid assessment, urban mission

Conference Title : ICUH 2018 : International Conference on Urban Health

Conference Location : Vienna, Austria

Conference Dates : June 14-15, 2018