



Evaluating the Impact of a Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Policy on Antibiotic Prescribing Patterns Among Private Pharmacists in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: A Research Protocol

Neema Kavishe¹, Aisha Mwambene¹, Juma Rashidi^{2,3}

¹ Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH)

² State University of Zanzibar (SUZA)

³ Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Morogoro

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Correspondence: nkavishe@hotmail.com

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Author notes

Neema Kavishe is affiliated with Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Aisha Mwambene is affiliated with Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Juma Rashidi is affiliated with State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

Inappropriate antibiotic dispensing by private pharmacists is a key driver of antimicrobial resistance in Tanzania. The Tanzania Pharmacy Council introduced a mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) policy for licence renewal to address this, but its specific effect on antibiotic prescribing patterns remains unevaluated. This protocol outlines a study to evaluate the impact of the mandatory CPD policy on antibiotic prescribing patterns among private pharmacists in Dar es Salaam. Its primary objectives are to compare the appropriateness of prescribing before and after policy implementation and to explore pharmacists' perceptions of the policy's influence on their practice. A mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design will be employed. A retrospective analysis of simulated patient visits will assess dispensing practices. This will be complemented by in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of private pharmacists to explore their experiences and perceptions. Quantitative data will be analysed for statistical significance, while qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis. As this is a protocol, no empirical findings are presented. The study is designed to measure changes, such as the proportion of encounters where antibiotics are inappropriately prescribed for viral syndromes, and to identify key themes in pharmacists' attitudes. The study will generate evidence on the effectiveness of a mandatory CPD policy in improving antibiotic stewardship within Tanzania's private pharmaceutical sector. Findings will inform the Tanzania Pharmacy Council on policy refinement. Results may also guide other low- and middle-income countries considering similar regulatory interventions to combat antimicrobial resistance. Antimicrobial resistance, continuing professional development, pharmacy practice, private sector, Tanzania, antibiotic stewardship. This protocol contributes a structured evaluation framework for a significant public health policy. It emphasises the

integration of behavioural insights with clinical practice data to assess regulatory impacts on antimicrobial resistance.

Keywords: *Continuing Professional Development, Antimicrobial Stewardship, Private Pharmacies, Sub-Saharan Africa, Antibiotic Prescribing, Health Policy Evaluation, Tanzania*

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