In 2013, the SA government committed to reduce, by at least 25%, the relative premature mortality (under 60 years of age) from NCDs by 2020 through its strategic plan for NCDs. This can be achieved through various population-level interventions. The WHO recommend the implementation of ‘Best buys’ interventions to address NCDs mortality and morbidities by addressing modifiable risk factors for CVD and diabetes such as poor diet, physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol consumption and excess body weight.

Establish a multi-sectoral structure from national to community governance structures to coordinate, monitor and evaluate WHO Best buys interventions.

A desk review was conducted in 2019-2020 to take stock of population level interventions targeting risk factors of diabetes and hypertension. The South African government has made progress in formulating policies and designing programs addressing population level-interventions as per WHO ‘Best buys’.

A qualitative study using key informant interviews was then done to identify and understand challenges and enablers for implementation of WHO best buys for risk factors of diabetes and hypertension in South Africa. A triangulation approach for analysis of both document review and qualitative data was used.
KEY FINDINGS

1. There are a plethora of policies, regulations and programs targeting major risk factors for diabetes and hypertension implemented in line with WHO ‘Best buys’ interventions since 1994 (post-apartheid era).

2. Enabling factors:
   - multi-sectoral collaboration engagement;
   - community ownership & empowerment;
   - building partnerships for co-creation of enabling environments;
   - leveraging existing infrastructure of other health programs;
   - contextualisation of policies & programs;
   - community driven activism;
   - political will and leadership.

3. Challenges hampering implementation:
   - upstream policy implementation processes (eg competing interests)
   - lack of balance between economic vs health gains
   - limited funding for population-based interventions and NCDs prevention policies and programs

IMPLICATIONS

➢ Inter-sectoral Engagement

There is a need for engagement of stakeholders from all levels of policy making, prevention, and management form the onset of the planning stages to ensure appropriate and effective implementation of WHO Best buys interventions (i.e. Supportive policies, programs and enabling environments addressing risk factors for NCDs).

➢ Coordination and M&E structure

A functional multi-sectoral structure is needed to ensure good coordination and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the WHO Best buys interventions in order to achieve the UN goal to lessen NCDs by 2030.

➢ Allocation of funding

The SA government to dedicate resources and investment to support coordinated implementation as well as monitoring and impact evaluation of NCDs interventions particularly at provincial, district and community levels.

References


Best Buys Picture source:
https://twitter.com/georgeinstitute/status/1044362651940335616?lang=zh-Hant

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This Issue Brief was developed with support from the Center for Evidence based Health Care (CEBHC) at Stellenbosch University.

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