

**Healthcare Workers meet,
24 Nov '08
Thirukostiyur PHC, Tirupathur Block, Sivaganga District**



As part of the Real-Time Biosurveillance project, IITM's RTBI organized a one-day workshop with the Health Care Workers/Village Health Nurses on 24th November 2008 at Thirukoshtiyur Primary Health Centre, Thirupathur, Sivaganga district, to get feedbacks on the first template of the mobile application, Real-Time Biosurveillance project.

The project is planned for pilot in Thirupathur block, Sivaganga district, Tamilnadu, India. Thirupathur block has 24 Village Health Nurses (VHNs) and hence by involving all the 24 VHNs the project gets a census data for the study.

Out of 24 VHNs, 23 of them participated in the workshop and gave active feedbacks on the mobile application.



Participants

The objective of the workshop were:

- To orient the VHNs on the RTBP project
- To demonstrate the mobile application to the VHNs.
- To get their feedback and comments

Workshop **Participants:**

- 23 VHNs
- RTBI – Suma, Geetha, Janakiraman, Rajkumar

The **workshop proceeded** in the following sequence:

- Orientation to the project
- Demonstration of the application on mobile
- Discussions and feedback
- Administer Questionnaire

The **findings and feedbacks** from the workshop were:

Education and experience:

All the participants were literate- could read and write (Tamil-fluent, English-to an extent). The education level of the VHNs ranged between 10th and 12th grade. Most of them had over 10 years of experience in the same field.



During a session

Population covered:

On an average each VHN covered 5000 population, ranging to 1500 families.

Other Medical facilities:

Most of the villages that these VHNs cover are located in remote areas. They have bare minimal medical facilities. And hence they rely back on the Rural Health Practitioners. One or two MBBS doctors and pharmacies are found in the towns.

Most of the VHNs recalled the outbreak of Chichen-guniya and its impact on the people. They mentioned Diarrhea, cholera and fever during rainy days also to be serious issue.

Existing ICT

The government of Tamilnadu has provided the VHNs with a Nokia mobile phone – model 1110 and BSNL service. They use it for communication with the DDHS, PHC, doctors, Delivery cases, local villagers. They find it very useful and handy. Currently the mobiles are used only for making calls. They are provided with Rs.150 INR for the bill payment.

The PHCs are equipped with Computers and BSNL broadband. The supervisor in the PHC makes use of the PC for few updations and to report on Morbidity cases. They often face issues with the connectivity.

Feedback on the application

The 23 VHNs were divided into two groups for demonstration. Based on the demonstration of the application, the groups came with the following:



Demonstration on mobile and feedback

Additions:

- Address
- Patient phone number
- Treated and referred
- Any family member suffering of the same problem
- Symptoms and signs (Scrolling)

They did not want any field to be deleted.

Moderator's Inferences (based on the questionnaire administered):

- Most of the VHNs actively participated in the workshop

- The VHNs were comfortable with English as the language being used for the template and reporting. Current medium of reporting to the PHCs are also English.
- There were strong requests for training on the other services on mobile usage, like SMS, even apart from the project use.
- All the VHNs were patient concerned.
- The VHNs are entitled to submit a report the PHC once a week. If they are able to generate report printouts based on the data fed on the mobile application, then there would be a better acceptance of the concept. Otherwise, the project is actually doubling up with the VHNs everyday tasks. Printouts of the reports can be an incentive to their time, to our project. At the same time, the printers in the PHCs are not reliable.



The group

Way forward

- Incorporate the feedbacks into the template
- Mobile purchase and testing
- Prepare User manual
- Second feedback meeting
- Deployment