



4.2

Key stakeholder interview Schedule

INTRODUCTION

(purpose of this is to make the interviewee feel comfortable)

- Introduce yourself
- Reason for interview (explain research)
- Ethics (explain consent form and any ethical issues)
- Ask the person interviewed if they have any questions.
- Thank the interviewee for their time and willingness to participate

Introductory questions

- Describe your current profession.
- What are your key responsibilities?
- What is your experience regarding the prevention and treatment of ARF/RHD?

A THEME

General Health System Issues

Probe: What is your sense of the issues around human resources for health at the national, regional, and local levels?

- Are there any issues unique to NCDs or ARF/RHD in particular of which you are aware?

Probe: How are healthcare workers trained in your district/region?

- Physicians
- Nurses
- Allied health care professionals
- Community health care workers
- Other relevant to your system (e.g., clinical officers)

Probe: Describe the typical referral system in your district.

- How does a patient get from a health center to the district hospital?
- If the patient needs specialised/tertiary care, how does that occur?
- Are there common barriers to the referral process (e.g., road conditions, expense of travel, waiting lists)?

Probe: What are the estimated costs to patients for care in your region and how do these work?

- At the Dispensary Level?
- At the Clinic Level?
- At the District Level?
- At the Tertiary Level?

- What happens if a patient presents for care but cannot pay?
- How is the health systems financed in your country and specifically, how are ARF/RHD financed?
- What areas do you think work well in your system regarding ARF/RHD?
- How do you think you could coordinate prevention and care better? What are the biggest challenges?
- What are the key health system barriers that make it difficult to coordinate the prevention and treatment of ARF/RHD? (Probe for: Is funding a key concern for you? Or the lack of human resources, or the information system, or poor facilities, or access to care?)

ARF/RHD Policies and Programmes

B THEME

Probe: What is your understanding of ARF/RHD-related policies at the national, regional, or local level? For instance, around disease notification, screening, prevention, and treatment?

- If these policies exist, how do they integrate with other policies or programmes, e.g., around infectious diseases, adult chronic care, maternal/child health, etc.?
- What is your understanding of how these policies came to be? Can you describe the process of government engagement if they were initiated outside the ministry of health?
- Are other ministries besides health, e.g., education, finance, housing/development engaged in these policies?
- If there are gaps between promulgation and implementation for these policies, what are some of the perceived barriers? Opportunities for improvement?
- To what extent is ARF/RHD a priority? And how has this changed over time?

Probe: What sort of leadership and oversight exists within the public (or private) health care sector regarding ARF/RHD prevention and control (again, at the national, regional, or local level)?

Please compare/contrast this with...

- Infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, or malaria
- Maternal and child health issues (including obstetric care and immunisation)
- Other NCDs, e.g. hypertension and cervical cancer

Probe: Are you aware of national, regional, or local NCD strategies and policies? How would ARF/RHD integrate with other relevant NCDs?

Probe: Can you describe the policy in terms of the health system building blocks?

Probes:

- Governance of NCD programmes (e.g. divisions, reporting structures)
- Healthcare financing (e.g. centralised/decentralised budget?)
- Health workforce (e.g. who is responsible for what)
- Medical products and technologies (e.g. drugs)
- Service delivery (e.g. primary care, integrated care/coordination of care/care continuum, acute tertiary care, intermediate/long-term care)
- Information and research (e.g. evidence base, collaborations with academia, academic health systems)
 - Information technologies (e.g. electronic medical records, big data analytics for health and healthcare)
- Socio-demographic considerations (e.g. youthful population)

Probe: Please describe any ARF/RHD-related public health activities (e.g., awareness campaigns) or research programmes (e.g., echocardiography screening studies) that you are aware of at a national, regional, or local level.



ARF/RHD Clinical Care

Probe: What guidelines, protocols (e.g., Revised Jones Criteria), or resources are you aware of (again, at the national, regional, and local levels) that help providers detect and manage.

- Strep throat
- ARF
- RHD
- How do these integrate with other guidelines (e.g., IMCI)?

Probe: What is the process for reviewing cases of RHD in your district, if any?

- Do you have an ARF or RHD registry? If so, tell us a bit about it.
- If not, are there medical record systems in place to review clinical cases and determine follow-up and referral plans?
- If so, are these systems being utilised? If not, do you know why?

Probe: For patients with RHD, is there a priority system for follow-up? How are priorities classified/defined (e.g., mild, moderate, severe RHD)?

Probe: Are people with RHD given care plans or pathways, and if so, are these plans standardised (e.g., using protocols or guidelines addressed above)?

Probe: When do you decide that someone needs to be referred for follow-up of known RHD? How often do you refer patients to a more specialised unit?

Probe: Suppose an RHD screening programme were to be implemented in your district. Is there capacity to deliver advanced medical or surgical care (either within the district or via a robust referral pathway) for cases of RHD identified through screening?

D THEME

Identifying the contextual factors that influence the design and implementation of ARF/RHD and NCD programmes

Probe: What are the key factors that shape your country's health system today?

Probe: What are your country's public health challenges?

Probe: What are your country's current healthcare challenges?

Closing questions

- What are your hopes for the preventing and managing ARF/RHD as it evolves?
- Before we wrap up, do you have any final thoughts that you'd like to share?

Thank the participant for their time and participation