

Breaking barriers and promoting education and awareness efforts in local communities as an intervention strategy to address myths, misconceptions, and religious beliefs

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Abstract

The study of malaria intervention options presented in this abstract aims to dispel local myths, misconceptions, and religious beliefs that may function as roadblocks to successful prevention and treatment initiatives. The goal of the study is to pinpoint optimal practices for enhancing the effectiveness of malaria interventions and ultimately lessening the disease's burden, especially in regions where these perceptions are firmly rooted and have the greatest influence on local people. In the efforts to address the issue of Myths and beliefs ie; I have had malaria, so I am immune, Malaria isn't fatal and Traditional medicine alone can cure malaria, a targeted education and awareness campaign was implemented in local communities. The campaign's main activities conducted in the western region of Kenya in the year 2022 included community meetings, the involvement of community stakeholders like local NGOs, CHOs, and area chiefs to provide accurate information about the disease and clarify common myths and misconceptions, radio broadcasts to reach a wider audience, pamphlets distribution to households to provide information about the disease. The target audience was local community members who held beliefs that could impede malaria intervention efforts. The campaign was a success in improving knowledge and awareness about malaria prevention and treatment. It also broke down barriers to effective intervention efforts and improved the impact of malaria prevention and treatment strategies in local communities. The intervention successfully improved access to proper treatment, enhanced trust in medical interventions, and reduced malaria-related morbidity and mortality among the people in the western Kenya region. Involving community stakeholders built trust and ownership, and radio broadcasts disseminated accurate information. However, addressing deeply entrenched beliefs required cultural sensitivity and was challenging. Overall, the intervention was effective in improving the impact of malaria prevention and treatment strategies in local communities. The response recommends conducting community assessments before interventions to address the entrenched beliefs, involve stakeholders, use multiple channels to disseminate information, maintain cultural sensitivity, continuously monitor and evaluate interventions to identify areas for improvement and scale up successful interventions to other communities with similar challenges.

Keywords: Myths, Misconceptions, Religious beliefs, Prevention, Local perceptions, Education and awareness campaign, CHOs (Community