

# EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED DELIVERY AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SARS-COV-2 Ag RDT IN A MARKET PLACE IN ZAMBIA

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## BACKGROUND

To expand access to testing beyond public health facilities and to strengthen surveillance efforts for COVID-19, community testing using COVID-19 antigen-based Rapid Diagnostic Tests (Ag-RDTs) has been identified as a major area of focus in Zambia. The aim of this research is to gather evidence on the feasibility and acceptability of community testing in a marketplace.

## OBJECTIVES

- Describe the implementation process and challenges associated with the deployment and administration of Ag-RDT tests
- Measure the extent to which Ag-RDT was implemented for surveillance in the marketplace
- Assess community health care worker and staff perspectives on the feasibility and acceptability of Ag-RDTs.
- Measure the success of quarantining after being tested in a community setting

## METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study with a mixed-method design was conducted in M'tendere market, a highly trafficked market in Lusaka Province. Data was collected via semi-structured surveys prospectively to explore individual satisfaction with testing, service delivery, and experience with self-quarantine for individuals testing positive.



### M'tendere Market, Lusaka

- One of the largest markets in Lusaka Province
- Services 3 surrounding neighbourhoods/communities
- Is visited by over 800 people per day

## RESULT

### Populations Characteristics

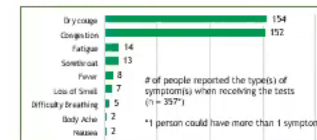
- Study population: 1,723 people who voluntarily accessed COVID-19 tests at the marketplace

- Demographics: Median age: 28 years (IQR 20-39 years) 54% males & 46% females
- Positivity rate: 0.6% (n=10)



### Reported Symptoms

- 99% of participants reported no symptoms at time of the test.
- Dry cough and congestion were the most common symptom combination (6%)

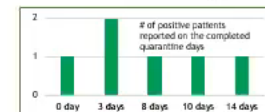


### Healthcare Workers' Feedback

- 100% of the HCWs that participated in the survey indicated that testing in the marketplace is feasible and acceptable.
- Suggested areas of improvement include the increase of sensitization /demand generation and the set-up of consistent testing days

### Follow-ups of Positive Cases

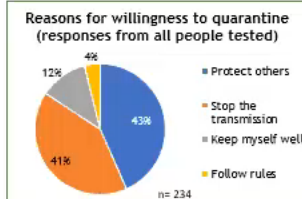
- 50% of the positive cases completed quarantine, while 50% cited work schedules as reasons for non-completion.



### Testing Reasons & Acceptability

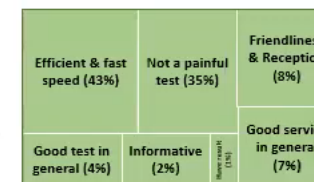
- 59% of respondents indicated a desire to know their COVID-19 status as the reason for testing & 32% indicated self-care.
- 67% and 33% of all respondents found the market testing experience and sample collection "very acceptable" and "acceptable" respectively.

### Opinions on Quarantine

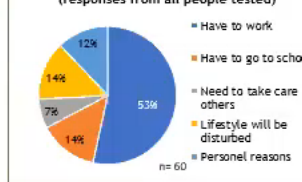


### What Worked Well among Individuals for Community Ag-RDT Testing?

- The service efficiency and short turnaround time were the major feedback on what worked well (43%), followed by the characteristics of the tests (35%) i.e. not a painful test



### Reasons for non-willingness to quarantine (responses from all people tested)



## CONCLUSION

- Community testing is a feasible and acceptable intervention to increase testing access in Zambia, especially coupling with community sensitization, education, and mobilization. This strategy provides an additional testing modality for countries to manage the epidemic and maintain surveillance.

## LIMITATION

- Causality cannot be inferred given it was an observational analysis but not a randomized design
- Self-selection bias and skewed feedback could happen given test receiving was voluntary
- External factors were not controllable

## LESSON LEARNED

- cooperation with local authority, sensitization and awareness raising, shifting testing sites regularly, and the inclusion of integrated services are key.

## WAY FORWARD

- The Ministry of Health in Zambia has included community testing in the National COVID-19 Testing Guidelines as one of the key strategies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



## CONTACTS

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