International collaboration between the Centre for Public Health, United Kingdom and SAPTA, Kenya

Short report
AUTHORS:

International Public Health Team, Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, UK
Caryl Beynon, Penelope Phillips-Howard, Mark Bellis


Support for Addictions Prevention and Treatment in Africa (SAPTA), Nairobi, Kenya
William Sinkele

www.sapta.or.ke
Background to the collaboration

Alcohol and drug use in Kenya: Worldwide, almost four percent of all deaths are attributed to alcohol. Alcohol is a causal factor in 60 types of disease and injury and a contributory factor in 200 others including cancers, liver disorders, hypertension and pancreatitis (WHO, 2011). Alcohol use is also associated with violence, suicides, child neglect/abuse and workplace absenteeism (WHO, 2011; Corrao et al., 2004; Lau et al., 2007; Borges et al., 2006). In sub Saharan Africa, heavy episodic (binge) drinking or frequent alcohol use is associated with unsafe sex, sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS (Chersich et al., 2007; Geibel et al., 2008; Luchters et al., 2011) and it has been identified as a risk factor for non-communicable disease among older people living in rural communities (Negin et al., 2011).

In Kenya, the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADA) have identified that the use of both alcohol and illicit drugs is increasing (NACADA, 2010). While alcohol is currently the substance most frequently used by Kenyan’s, a small study of rural secondary schools in Kenya reported the use of illicit drugs, most notably cannabis and khat (Ndetei et al., 2010). Injecting drug use is also practiced in some areas of Kenya, which has implications for the spread of HIV in situations where people share used injecting equipment (Becherleg et al., 2005).

Support for Addictions Prevention and Treatment in Africa (SAPTA): SAPTA, is a Kenyan based NGO which provides educational programmes for addiction counsellors, runs community based prevention programmes, advocates for greater access to treatment, promotes professionalism in the addiction field through strengthening and capacity building for treatment centres and provides outpatient treatment. SAPTA is recognised by the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counsellors (NAADAC) as an approved addiction counselling training centre; it is the only NAADAC approved centre in Africa. Up to December 2010, 134 addiction counsellors had graduated with a diploma from SAPTA. The Director of SAPTA is Dr William Sinkele and the organisation is based in Nairobi.

International Public Health Team, Centre for Public Health (CPH): The team is developing a programme of work in low and middle income countries. As part of this process, the team is building links with global agencies in order to focus upon major public health challenges including alcohol and drug related harms. Joint activities have been developed with a range of health-related organisations including SAPTA.
Collaborative activities to date

Initial conversations between SAPTA and the International Public Health Team identified the possibility of working together in both the research and education arenas. A key issue for SAPTA is the development of a distance learning model of education for counsellors, with a key priority being evidence-based approaches to substance abuse treatment and harm reduction programmes. The collaboration also proposed to explore potential opportunities to develop alcohol treatment services within HIV home testing and counselling services in Kenya, with links between SAPTA and one of their partner NGO’s which provides a home-based delivery service (Liverpool Voluntary Care and Testing). How best to integrate alcohol therapies (for example brief interventions) with home based voluntary care and testing will be examined and training for community based workers will be devised. Researchers within the International Public Health Team as well as colleagues at the School of Tropical Medicine, University of Liverpool, will facilitate evaluations of quality assurance of training and enable longitudinal monitoring to assess the impact on HIV positive individuals.

As part of the research development process, it was decided that this collaboration would develop to include other organisations based in western Kenya such as KUAP Pandipieri a NGO that provides addiction counselling, among other services. The International Public Health Team would provide technical assistance in relation to the data generated by counsellors, and epidemiological and statistical support, leading to potential opportunities for longitudinal monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. SAPTA and the International Public Health Team, also proposed to explore and develop cross-cutting research with other collaborative partners.

As a first collaborative step, to facilitate research and training, SAPTA was keen to develop its infrastructure. More specifically, SAPTA was keen to renovate a disused building at its headquarters in Nairobi into a Learning Centre, equipped with an appropriate IT system, classrooms and library resources. In response, the Centre for Public Health provided SATPA with a small capital investment grant in order to achieve this aim. The Learning Centre is now complete with a library, a classroom and a seminar room. The opening of the Learning Centre occurred on the 5th July 2011 and Drs Phillips-Howard and Beynon were invited to attend this event, together with ministry officials, Nairobi university colleagues, board members, counsellors and other key stakeholders. In addition to the opening, Drs Beynon and Phillips-Howard gave a presentation to addiction counsellors which facilitated a fruitful exchange of ideas.
Opening of SAPTA’s Learning Centre

From left to right on the photo: Dr JK Mutiso, chairman, SAPTA; Dr Penelope Phillips-Howard, Head of the International Public Health Team, CPH; Dr Caryl Beynon, Researcher, International Public Health Team, CPH, Dr William Sinkele, D. Min., Executive Director, SAPTA; Dr Sobbie Mulindi, Deputy Director, National AIDS Control Council (NACC); Mr Aggrey Busena, National Director, National Campaign Against Drugs Agency (NACADA).

SAPTA Director says:

“We really have appreciated CPH support for the Learning Centre and the presence of Dr Penelope Phillips-Howard and Dr Caryl Beynon for the opening ceremony. The talk was very helpful with our Technical Assistance and Capacity Building team. The Learning Centre was very much appreciated by our special guests: Mr Busena, the head of NACADA, Dr Mulindi, the deputy director of NACC and Mrs Emma Mwambui, the head of HIV prevention for USAID.”
The Learning Centre has really transformed our mini-campus in a real sense of being a learning institute. The students and trainers are really appreciative of the two new classrooms and especially the expanded library. We had a visit from the person responsible within the Ministry of Higher Education for our approval as a tertiary training institute a month ago. We presently have temporary approval. He was so impressed with the Learning Centre that he said we can apply for permanent registration in November at the end of our one year temporary approval.”

SAPTA’s Learning Centre (also see the photograph on the front cover)
Next steps

Now that the Learning Centre is open and operational, we will explore the possibilities for collaborating further on research and educational activities. The Centre for Public Health is continuing its discussions about the possibility of supporting training for addiction counsellors, while the International Public Health Team will explore collaborative research opportunities as detailed above. The addiction counsellors that attended the opening of the Learning Centre were invited to contact the International Public Health Team with research ideas, in particular ideas relating to the use of alcohol data; seed money may be available to build the best idea into a research project.

Glossary

NAADAC: National Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counsellors

NACADA: National Campaign Against Drugs Agency

NACC: National AIDS Control Council
NGO: non-government organisation

SAPTA: Support for Addictions Prevention and Treatment in Africa

References


