

Abstract Submission for ILC 2013

Health systems

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SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF LEPROSY CONTROL IN BIHAR, INDIA

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Introduction: Leprosy control programme has made remarkable progress in Bihar with the involvement of different stakeholders. Bihar is one of the three states in India yet to achieve the elimination goals and reports third highest number of new cases in the country. Situational analysis is needed to devise strategies aimed at further reduction of leprosy burden in the state.

Methods: SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of leprosy control services provided in Bihar was done to assess the current situation.

Results: The number of new cases detected is showing decline from 2011. Involvement of community volunteers like Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) is a major strength for enhancing early case detection and an important link between leprosy services and community. Leprosy services are delivered through general health system. Implementation of rehabilitation services for person affected by leprosy still remains as a major challenge. The expertise and the number of Reconstructive Surgeries (RCS) done are declining since last two years. Lepra reactions are frequently missed by the local health workers due to the lack of knowledge. Most of the vertical program staff is expected to retire in the next 5 years hence could threaten the sustainability of leprosy services especially management of reactions. The potential of civil society organizations remains untapped and their involvement needs to be explored.

Conclusion: There is an urgent need for establishing leprosy referral centers to manage complications and surgical rehabilitation. Continuing Medical Education to the health professionals is needed to sustain the leprosy expertise. Engaging the community through civil society partnership is needed for sustaining the leprosy services.