

Development of communication tools on meningitis adapted to the African continent

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The African meningitis belt

Introduction

Meningitis is a disease of public health concern in many countries of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa carries a large part of the burden with 26 countries included in the so called African meningitis belt. Community awareness and sensibilization has been identified as a key pillar of the WHO roadmap to fight meningitis by 2030. Most communication tools do not reflect local realities of African countries. The Molecular Epidemiology for Vaccine Policy (MEVacP) project aimed to develop communication tools and contents adapted to an African population.

Methods

- ✓ Scenarisation work was carried out to create a comic strip telling the story of an African little boy confronted with meningitis.
- ✓ The main targets were children, parents and teachers. Both a French and English version of the story have been developed
- ✓ These communication tools have been shared with the public on the project website and social network accounts (Facebook and twitter) created to inform on meningitis.
- ✓ Community awareness campaigns were also organized in primary schools and health centers of three city of the country; Abidjan, Korhogo and Tengrela.



Figure 1: image of our social networking pages and website



Figure 2: A photo from an awareness-raising session with school children

Results

- ✓ Seven episodes of the comic strip have been produced in French and English, covering the most important topics identified by a multidisciplinary team: i) description of the disease, ii) symptoms, iii) transmission routes, iv) consequences of the diseases, v) attitude to have when confronted with the disease, vi) vaccination and vii) importance of community awareness
- ✓ A total of 500 booklets and 50 posters have been shared with the different communities in three cities of Côte d'Ivoire (Figure 3). The tools have been made available online and the links shared with the different education and health department involved in health awareness campaign in Côte d'Ivoire for further use.
- ✓ The cartoons are also being finalized and will also be made available through the same channels.



Figure 3: The number of posters (bleu) and booklet (green) distributed across Côte d'Ivoire

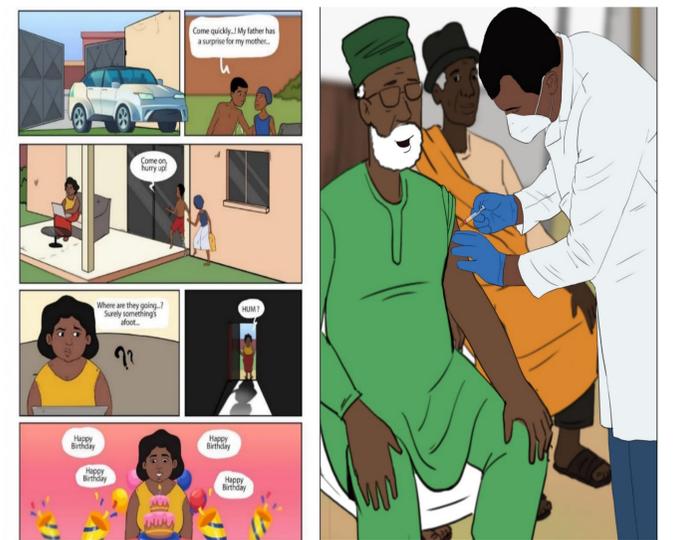


Figure 4: Some images from "Kolo and Meningitis" comic strip

Conclusion

Health communication must be adapted to the targeted populations. It is important to create communication tools in languages and with characters that reflect local realities. The story of Kolo, available in French and English, will be a useful didactic tool in many African countries for raising awareness on meningitis, especially among children. Translations in local languages could further improve its reach.

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