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Blood bank set to enhance quick access to life-saving blood in Kwale County



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Blood bank project, a collaboration of GIZ, Kwale County government and Base Titanium

Antenatal and postnatal hemorrhage (excessive bleeding before, during or shortly after child birth) has been found to be a major cause of death in Kenya (KDHS 2014). Yet in many cases, blood for transfusion is not always readily available due to the long distances to be travelled to secure blood and related products. In Kwale County, the nearest blood bank is in Mombasa County's Coast General Hospital where it takes up to five hours to travel to the hospital to obtain blood and related products. This has often put patients who need emergency life-saving blood transfusion at risk of complications and even deaths.

At the same time, even in cases where relatives and well-wishers donate blood, in Kwale County, it still has to be sent to Mombasa County for screening. In some cases, the blood screening machine breaks down, further compounding the problem. For example, in mid-2016, screening equipment in Mombasa County Referral Hospital broke down, necessitating blood to be sent to Nairobi for screening. This resulted in delays for many days, affecting operations including life-saving caesarean sections. Sometimes, patients with fractures had to wait in wards for up to three weeks before their surgeries could be done. Other emergency procedures were affected by this situation, sometimes leading to unnecessary deaths.

But this situation is set to change with the new Blood Satellite Centre within Kwale County that has been set up through a partnership between the Kwale County Government, Base Titanium and GIZ Health Sector Programme. The Blood Bank has been established within Msambweni County Referral Hospital. This will not only improve access to blood and related products in Msambweni but in the whole of Kwale County. Patients needing blood transfusion from health facilities within Kwale County can be referred to Msambweni County Referral Hospital to receive care quickly, within 45 minutes. This means that more lives will be saved and health outcomes of patients will be greatly improved.

The Base Titanium funded the actual construction of the premises while the Kwale County Government funded part of the infrastructure and will equip and staff the facility. GIZ-HSP on its part provided technical assistance towards developing the proposal, designing the facility and supporting the overall project management.

The actual operationalisation of the blood bank is slated for early 2017.

Tags

