

Informed consent Form for Community Pharmacists participants in the PACS Project Landscape assessment Focused Group Discussion

Title of the Study: Landscape assessment of Promoting Accreditation for community health services (PACS) project.

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a focus group discussion (FGD) as part of the PACS project aimed at improving family planning and primary healthcare services. This consent form provides you with information about the study, what you will be asked to do, and the risks and benefits of participation.

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to understand the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of community pharmacists (CPs) in relation to the PACS project interventions, including regulatory compliance, operational health, community reach, and willingness for interventions.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will engage in a focus group discussion lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. You will be asked questions about your experiences as a CP, your business practices, and your views on the PACS project.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be confidential. We will not use your name or any identifier that could reveal your identity in any reports or publications resulting from this study.

Risks and Benefits: There are no direct risks or benefits to you from participating in this study. However, your insights will contribute to understanding and improving the PACS project's impact on community health services.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate or to leave the focus group at any time without any negative consequences.

Questions: If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a participant, please feel free to ask now or contact the study team at [contact information].

Consent: If you understand the study and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant's Name (Print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for considering participation in this study. Your input is valuable and will contribute to enhancing community health services through the PACS project.

PPMV Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Introductions

Hello everyone. My name is _____, and I am a part of the research team from _____. We are conducting a study under the PACS project, funded by MSD for Mothers, focusing on promoting accreditation for community health services (family planning and primary healthcare services) provided by Patent & Proprietary Medicine Vendors like yourselves.

Today, we are here to discuss your experiences and perspectives on the services you provide, the challenges you face, and your thoughts on the PCN accreditation process and other regulations. Your insights are crucial for understanding the role PPMVs play in community healthcare and how the PACS project can support your efforts.

Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential. We encourage open and honest discussions; there are no right or wrong answers. We won't be using your names, and for accuracy, we would like to record this conversation, if you all agree.

Note takers must record the following in notes:

1. Date of Interview
2. Start time of interview
3. Stop time of interview
4. Interviewer Name
5. Note taker Name
6. Interview Tool used
7. Organization of Interviewee
8. Gender of Interviewee

Your participation is greatly appreciated, and your feedback will be instrumental in improving healthcare services within your community through the PACS project.

Discussion guide

Regulatory compliance

1. What do you think about the process of renewing your PCN license annually, including the requirements for family planning and primary healthcare services?
 - Probing: Are there any parts of this license renewal process that are particularly easy or hard for you?
 - Probing: Are there any supports or incentives that have helped you or could help you in meeting these requirements?
2. How compliant are you with the requirements for reporting the services delivered in your premises?
 - Probing: What makes it easy or hard for you to send your reports as at when due?
3. How does following these regulatory rules (PCN) affect your business and how people in the community see you?
 - Follow-Up: Do you think being compliant with regulations has brought any benefits or drawbacks to your business?

Operational health

4. How do you manage the stock of medicines and other items in your shop?
 - Probing: What are the main challenges you face in managing your inventory, and how do you solve these issues?
5. Have you ever used a Vendor-Managed Inventory System? If so, what was your experience with it?
 - Follow-Up: What challenges have you faced while using VMI, and are you open to using such a system in the future?
6. Do you prefer using one digital system for both inventory and financial records, or separate systems for each? Why?
7. Can you describe how you keep your financial records, like sales and expenses?
 - Probing: How do these methods help in making your business more efficient and transparent?
 - How do you check the quality of the medicines you sell?

- Follow-Up: What are the challenges you face in ensuring medicine quality, and how do you address them?
8. Have you incorporated any technological tools for managing your inventory or financial records? If so, what are they?
- Probing: Are there any specific tools or systems you wish to learn more about or have access to?
9. What kind of financial records do you maintain, like bank statements or sales ledgers, and how often?
- Follow-Up: Are you interested in transitioning to digital record-keeping?
10. Do you use a bank account for your business transactions? If so, what type of account?
- Probing: If you rely mostly on cash, what are the reasons, and are you considering using digital payment methods? (*digital payments include: POS, bank transfer*).
11. Would you prefer a credit facility in the form of direct loans or commodities on credit? Why?
- Probing: How will you consider loans with interest rates, and why?
12. Do you have any assets that could be used as collateral for a loan? If so, what are they?

Community reach and impact:

13. What types of health services do you offer in your community? How do you decide which services are most needed?
- Probing: Have you considered adding different products or services to meet community demands and increase your income?
14. Can you share an example of how your services have positively affected someone's health or the overall wellbeing of your community?
15. What has been your experience in providing services to remote or underserved areas? Are there any logistical, financial, or cultural challenges you face?
- Follow-Up: How do you overcome these barriers to ensure essential health services reach these areas?
16. How has working with other health providers, NGOs, or government programs helped to improve the health services you provide in your community?
17. Are you familiar with the different tiers in the PCN accreditation program? How do they relate to your business?

18. How does your shop's branding (e.g. green dot logo, signages, other IEC materials) affect your business? Do you think it has an impact on how the community perceives your services?

Willingness and Readiness for Interventions

19. How do you feel about adopting new programs like the PACS project? What makes you excited or worried about these initiatives?

- Probing: Are there any specific aspects of the PACS project that particularly interest you or cause concern?
- Probing: Are you willing to take loans with interest rates, and if not, why?

20. Can you share your experiences with business loans or other financial services like savings, loans, and insurance? How have these impacted your business?

- Follow-Up: What are your preferences for how these financial products should be offered, manual or digital? (Manual [physical interaction with bank staff]; Digital- assessing the services through mobile devices).

21. What kind of support or resources would help you in adopting new programs or improving your business operations?

- Probing: Do you have a business plan, or are you part of any cooperative or savings group that helps in managing your business?

22. Have you participated in any previous interventions or support programs? What impact did they have on your business and the services you provide to the community?

- Follow-Up: What lessons have you learnt from these experiences?

Closing comments: (comments from participants)

Do you have any questions, or insight for PACS project