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UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING SYSTEM IN THE EKURHULENI HEALTH DISTRICT, 2020

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Supervisor

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A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Medicine (Public Health Medicine) in the School of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, March, 2022

Declaration

I, Mazvita Naome Muropa Mberi, student number 9901201F, declare that this Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Medicine (Public Health Medicine) degree in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. The work has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other University.

Signature of Candidate:

Name of Candidate: Mazvita Naome Muropa Mberi

6th day of October 2022, in Johannesburg

Abstract

Background: COVID-19 Contact tracing has been shown to avert outbreak propagation by preventing secondary infections from COVID-19 cases. There is a paucity of information on implementing functional, effective contact tracing. **Objectives:** The aim of our study was to study contact tracing implementation and the barriers and facilitators of contact tracing implementation in the Ekurhuleni Health District (EHD). **Methodology:** A total of 118 Contact tracers (CTs) completed self-administered questionnaires, and 22 managers were interviewed. **Results:** Equipment availability (54/118, 45.8%), accurate client information (85/118,72.0%), client cooperation (47/118, 39.8 %) and willingness to engage with health services (40/118, 33.9%), effective planning and communication (33/118, 28,.0%) were important facilitators to finding and following up contacts and managing symptomatic contacts. **Conclusions**: Data quality and resource availability were key barriers or facilitators to contact tracing implementation for both managers and tracers. The use of telephonic contact tracing methods was perceived to improve tracing efficiency, while physical contact tracing was perceived to improve tracing effectiveness. **Recommendations:** Early, effective community engagement, staff support, and the availability acceptable, effective information management systems and guidelines will facilitate better contact tracing implementation in the future.

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