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Terre des hommes
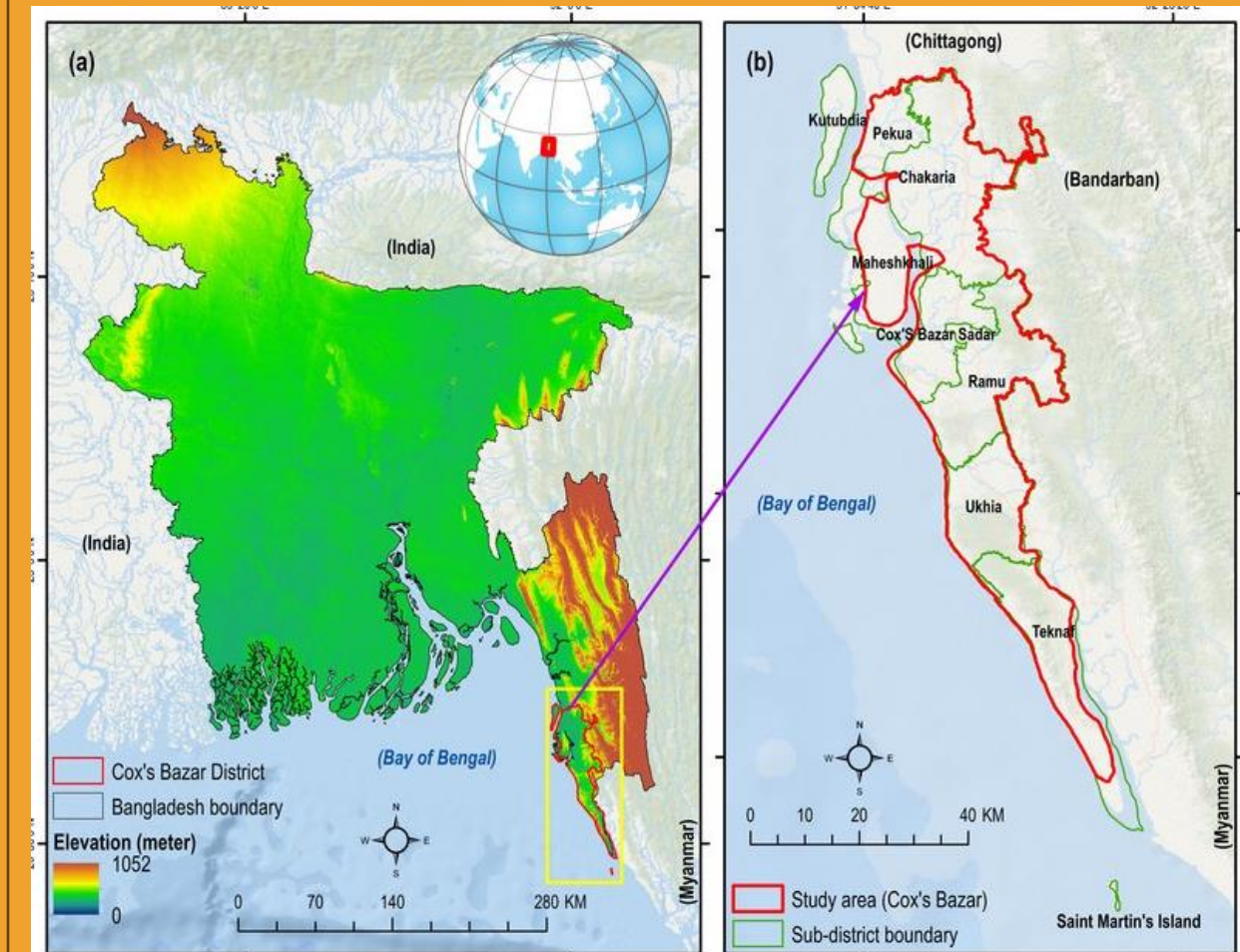Helping children worldwide.

Qualitative assessment of the implementation of Electronic Medical Records (EMR) at primary healthcare for Rohingya refugees

Rapid influx of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, with diverse pressing health needs, presents number of challenges for health care systems. To address this challenge of emerging unmet health needs, health providers have historically operated without formal systems for maintaining patient records. Lack of access to medical records hinders opportunities to establish consistent access to quality healthcare and results in poor health outcomes. Terre des hommes (Tdh) has started the implementation of EMR in their primary healthcare center (PHC) in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, in 2022, for provision of services to Rohingya refugees. By January 2023, EMR system achieved an impressive 98% coverage, displaying successful integration of health records and is now preparing to extend EMR rollout to another PHC in the area.

Main objective of this study was to assess perceptions of caregivers around ease of implementation of EMR and associated gaps and opportunities
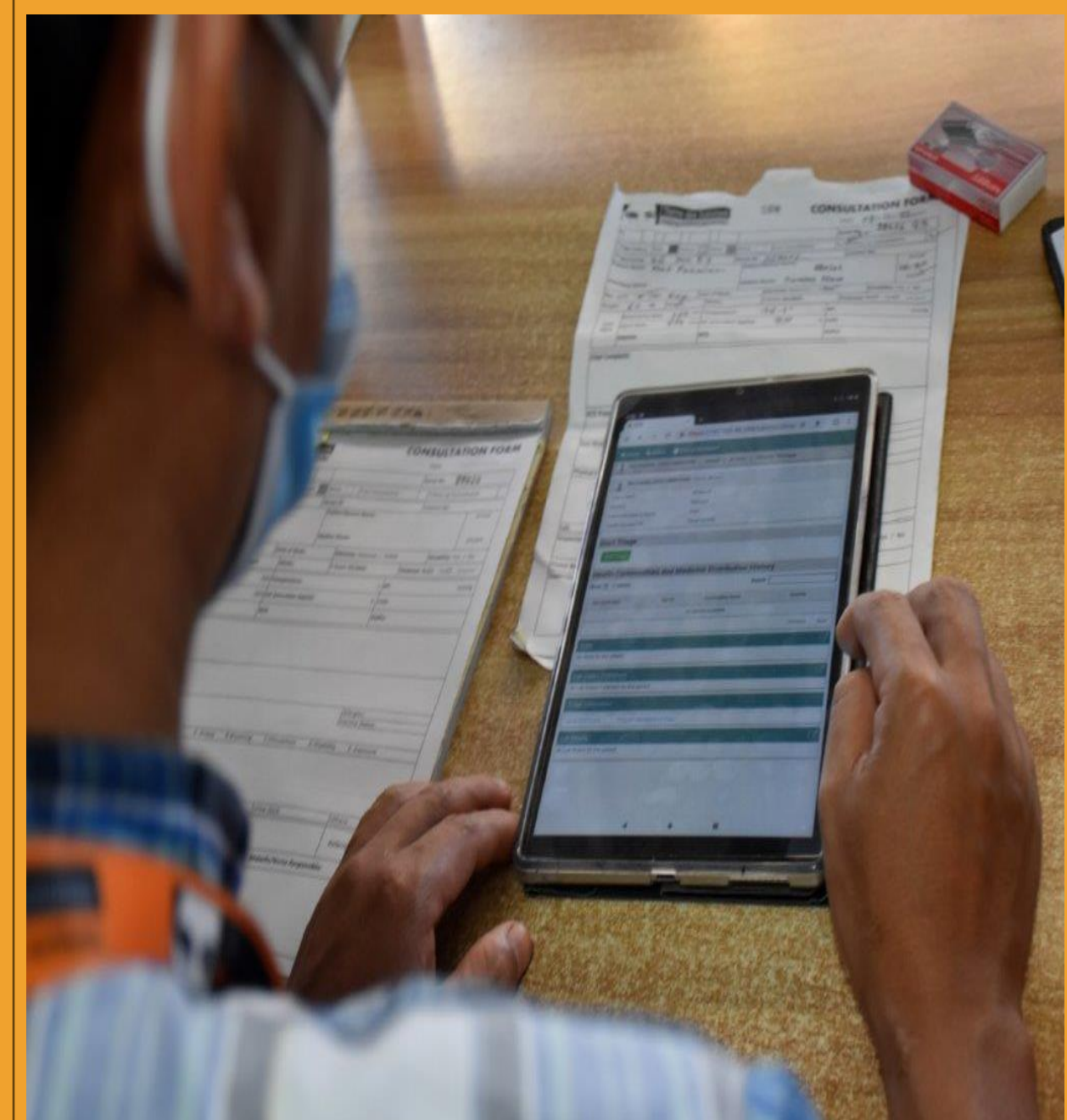

(2) (PDF) Improving Spatial Agreement in Machine Learning-Based Landslide Susceptibility Mapping (researchgate.net)

Study Objectives : To explore the opportunity and challenges for rolling out of EMR in Refugee camps

Study employed qualitative methodology, through semi-structured Focus Group Discussions (FGD), to comprehensively assess EMR implementation by various perspectives within the healthcare setting. Informed consent was obtained from 20 participants, comprising 5 in administrative and 15 in clinical roles. Participants represented diverse disciplines, including TRIAGE, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Casualty, Lab, In-Patient Department (IPD), clinical administration, and stock management.

Study results derived from pre- and post-implementation interviews were categorized to provide comprehensive insights into EMR integration. Pre-and post-implementation data were grouped into following categories:

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
EMR Modules Understanding	EMR Staff Ownership
Design Process Engagement	Workload Effect
Data Completeness	Feature completeness and functionality
Workload Effect	Interaction with technical support
	Lessons Learnt & Data Quality

Results

Results : The above-mentioned categories facilitated a detailed analysis, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the impact of EMR implementation, ranging from data standardization and workload to user experience and technical support interactions. The study presents valuable insights into the effective implementation of EMR in primary health care settings for Rohingya context. It contributed to enhanced knowledge regarding gaps and opportunities around EMR adoption, better tracking of patients with prior history, better forecasting for more effective stock management, improved patient support among others. Identified barriers include insufficient technical support post-launch, healthcare professionals perceiving an increased workload with EMR, and a notable learning curve for staff acclimating to EMR usage.

"As a doctor, EMR helps me track the patient record conveniently. We can see the patient's previous prescriptions, including medications with doses and advice. Furthermore, patients are also happy to receive digital prescriptions that are easy to understand and acceptable to everyone. If any patient comes without a previous prescription, we can easily find their previous record through EMR, which is very useful."

Conclusion

These findings underscore the challenges and opportunities associated with EMR integration, shedding light on critical factors influencing successful implementation in humanitarian response programming. As Tdh focuses on spearheading further expansion of EMR systems in other PHC's across Cox Bazaar, strategies for consistent technical support, rational deployment of HR to address the workload and improved commitment for staff will be taken into account for more effective implementation.