

## **Key Challenges in the Current TB & HIV Information System in South Africa - A Case Study in Khayelitsha, Western Cape**

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### **Abstract**

South Africa has one of the most serious human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and tuberculosis (TB) epidemics in the world, with high incidence, prevalence and co-infection rates. Information is at the heart of managing the TB and HIV epidemics, both inside and outside healthcare facilities. All stakeholders including the general public, patients, health professionals and policy-makers need access to valid, complete and up-to-date information in order to make choices and decisions (HIQA, 2013). Yet, this goal is not often met in developed countries and almost never in developing ones.

This research, conducted by means of a qualitative case study, aims to understand the key challenges in the current collection, reporting and use of TB and HIV information in under-privileged settings in South Africa, because a holistic and in-depth understanding of key issues is a prerequisite for addressing and improving them. The findings of the study suggest that there are serious interrelated challenges in 1) the quality of data produced by the South African TB and HIV information system, 2) the manner the information system functions to produce that data, and 3) the utilisation of that data. However, this study also identifies positive, well-functioning characteristics in the South African TB and HIV information system. Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of seeing the health information system as an integral part of the health system.

This study provides unique insights into the TB and HIV information system in resource-restricted settings thereby contributing to a growing literature of health information systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).