

Non-Communicable Diseases



Abt Associates collaborates with local stakeholders to address the **growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), or chronic diseases**, by equipping health workers with the knowledge and skills to provide NCD services; enabling managers to monitor and improve the quality of care; empowering individuals to prevent and manage chronic illnesses; and supporting the development of policies that facilitate access to comprehensive chronic care.

Strengthening Health Systems to Address Non-Communicable Diseases

With the inclusion of NCDs in the Sustainable Development Goals, effective approaches to NCD prevention and control are needed now more than ever throughout the world. Abt has managed efforts to prevent and control NCDs such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease in more than a dozen countries across five continents. We work at all levels of the health system, but focus particularly on the primary health care and community levels, where NCDs can often be detected early, managed cost-effectively, or prevented altogether.

Evaluating Hypertension Programs in Kenya to Increase Access to Care

In Africa, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among adults over age 30. Integration of NCD care into health services is urgently needed in the region to increase access to hypertension screening and treatment. Funded by AstraZeneca U.K., the **Healthy Heart Africa** programme in Kenya is helping to address this need through pilot projects that build awareness of hypertension and its prevention and increase access to screening and treatment for patients with hypertension. The program is testing how best to integrate NCD care into HIV and primary care platforms, with a focus on strong community outreach. Baseline results have identified a significant need to strengthen provider knowledge and counselling skills. The survey also suggests a need for improved hypertension awareness in the population. Abt is monitoring and evaluating the program to improve hypertension prevention and treatment approaches in Kenya and to inform future expansion.



Photo by: Fiji Health Sector Support Program

Supporting Community-based Approaches to Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes Care

Access to NCD care remains a key challenge across the globe. As part of Medtronic Philanthropy's **HealthRise** program, Abt supports community-based demonstration projects that aim to expand access to care for cardiovascular disease and diabetes among underserved populations in targeted communities in India, the United States, South Africa, and Brazil.

Informed by community needs assessments, Abt and its partners are engaging stakeholders—including governments, health care providers, patients, and families—to design, support, and evaluate innovative demonstration projects implemented by grantees. These projects strengthen health systems, advance NCD-related policies and advocacy, leverage caregivers and frontline health workers and empower individuals living with cardiovascular disease and diabetes to successfully manage their condition over the long term.

In India, HealthRise grantees are working with community health workers, clinicians and pharmacists to increase outreach, screening, referral and care in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

In the U.S., HealthRise grantees are extending traditional health care delivery into the community and homebased settings by integrating both community paramedics and community health workers as part of their existing coordinated care teams to increase screening, diagnosis, and disease management among underserved populations in Minnesota.

Preventing and Managing Diabetes and Hypertension in the Community in Fiji

In Fiji, where one in six adults has diabetes and one in five has high blood pressure, Abt JTA and the Ministry of Health have trained community health nurses and public health dietitians to annually screen for diabetes and hypertension at the community level, using innovative NCD toolkits. The equipment and supplies in these portable toolkits enable community nurses and dietitians to effectively screen for these diseases in rural and remote areas, and to help those diagnosed with, or at risk of, diabetes and hypertension, to control their conditions and avoid, reduce, or delay the onset of complications.



Photo by: Silvia Rabadi

Improving the Quality of Hypertension Care in Central Asia

Abt supported improvements in health service delivery among priority programs, including NCDs, in post-Soviet Central Asia for nearly 20 years. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, Abt contributed to the development of clinical guidelines for detecting and managing hypertension, trained health workers to implement the guidelines, introduced continuous quality improvement processes for hypertension services in primary health care facilities, and aided the establishment of hypertension support groups to help patients manage their conditions. These improvements in the quality of hypertension services were enabled and enhanced by broader activities to strengthen health systems, including improving legal and policy frameworks; creating new primary health care practices by restructuring health systems; and developing linkages between service delivery, health financing reform, and medical education. These efforts significantly improved the quality of hypertension care, as measured by increased screening rates and better management of identified cases.

Increasing Early Detection of Breast Cancer in Jordan

Mortality rates from breast cancer were high in Jordan due to late detection of the disease. To increase demand for early screening, Abt and its partners implemented a community outreach program that integrated interpersonal communication about family planning with breast cancer education and screening and then reinforced these messages through mass media messages motivating women to get breast exams. To strengthen the supply of screening services, Abt supported the development of national guidelines for breast cancer screening and diagnosis, and trained doctors to conduct clinical breast exams. In four years, the number of new breast cancer cases in Jordan diagnosed in the early stages (stages 0-II) increased from about 30 percent to 59 percent.

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Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.

