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Background

Malawi

- A country in southern Africa
- Home to 11 medically relevant snakes
- 80% of the population are agricultural farmers with a high risk of snakebite
- Assessed knowledge of community health workers (CHWs) and community members on first aid and prevention of snakebite

Methods

Study design

- Cross-sectional survey

Study setting

- Neno district, south-west Malawi
- Rural and remote territory

Study population /sample size

- 691 (312 CHWs and 379 Community members)

Data collection

- Survey questionnaire using a mobile device
- Proper and harmful first aid practices
- Proven and unproven prevention methods

Data analysis

- Creation of a knowledge score, categorised into inadequate, fairly adequate, adequate
- Comparison of performance between groups to identify factors associated with adequate knowledge

Results

Demographics

- 65% were female
- Median age = 39 years: IQR = 30-48
- 52% (n=361) had up to primary education
- 63% travel more than 1 hour to nearest health facility

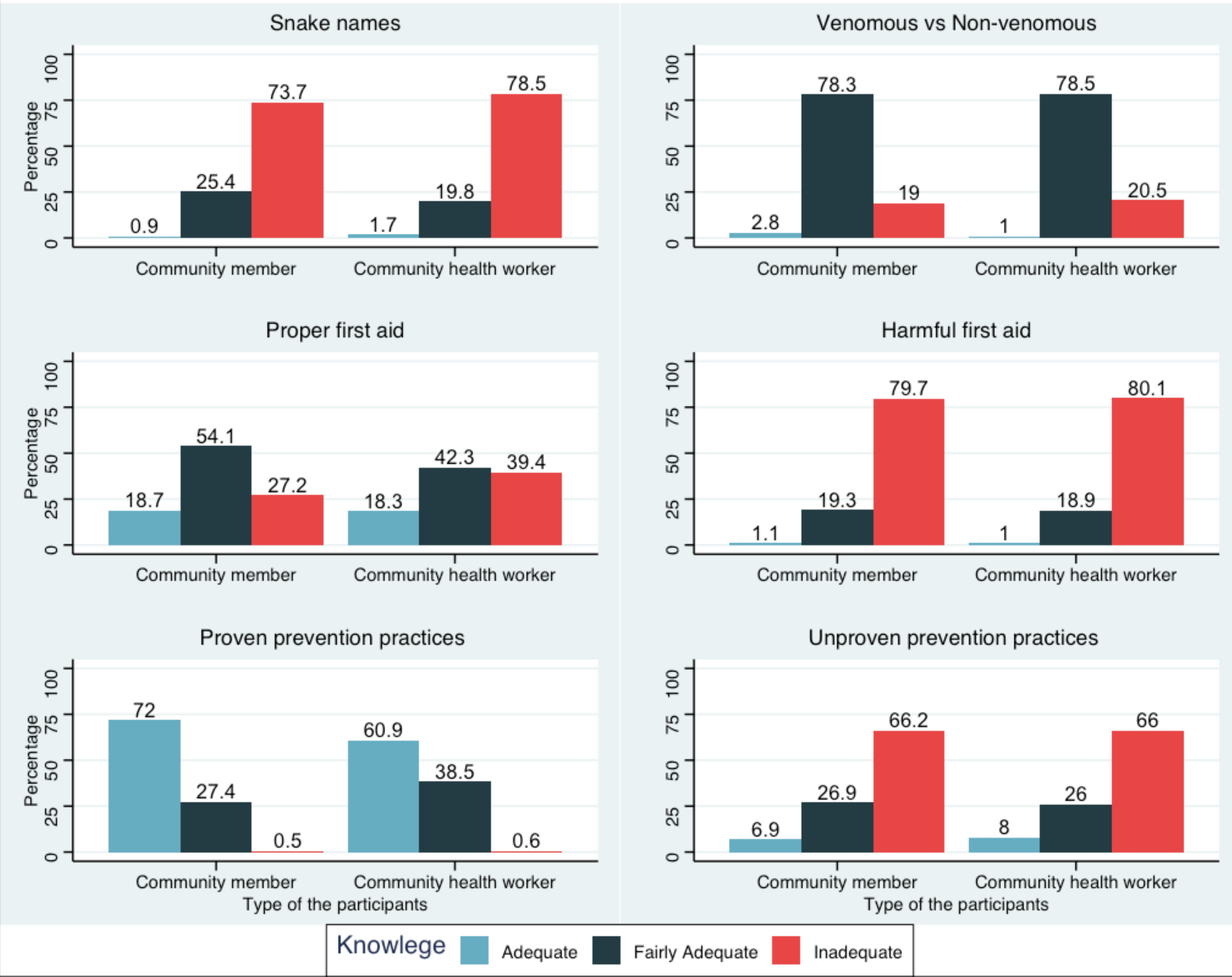
Overall Identification, first aid and prevention knowledge

- 8 people had adequate knowledge of snake identification
- 11 people had adequate knowledge of first aid
- 14.3% (n=99) had adequate knowledge on prevention
- No relevant differences were observed between CHWs and community members (Figure 1)

Predictors of Identification, first aid and prevention knowledge

- Being male was associated with a higher level of knowledge about snake identification ($\beta=1.3$; 95%CI: 1.0 -1.5; $p<0.01$ and first aid ($\beta=2.7$; 95%CI: 0.61, 4.9; $p=0.01$)
- Knowledge about snake identification increased with age ($\beta=0.02$; 95%CI: 0.01- 0.03; $p<0.01$)
- None of the variables were associated with snakebite prevention methods

Knowledge on identification, first aid and prevention of snakebite in Neno, Malawi. N=691



Note:
Adequate = Knowledge score $\geq 75\%$
Fairly Adequate = Knowledge score of ≥ 50 and <75
Inadequate = Knowledge score of <50



Fig. 1 Bitis arietans

Fig. 2 Dendroaspis polylepis

Fig. 3 Boaedon capensis

Fig. 4 Thelotornis species

Fig. 5 Philothamnus species

Fig. 6 Naja mossambica



Conclusion

- Knowledge among community health workers and community members remains insufficient
- To improve first aid and prevention practices, we recommend awareness campaigns and training of CHWs