

## Enhancing Pharmacovigilance: A National Training Initiative

The National Pharmacovigilance Training held in June 2024 aimed to bolster participants' proficiency in the principles and practices of pharmacovigilance. The training emphasized the importance of monitoring medicine safety, relevant terminology, safety monitoring methods, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and the management of side effects related to tuberculosis (TB) and HIV medications. Participants also developed advanced skills in identifying and preventing potential medication errors, equipping them to train healthcare professionals in their respective regions.

This essential training brought together healthcare professionals from the public sector across all 14 regions of the country. Notably, for the first time, the private sector was included, with selected private healthcare facilities from Windhoek invited to participate. This inclusion fostered collaboration between the private and public healthcare sectors, providing a valuable platform for learning and cooperation.



The training commenced with participants, including pharmacy professionals, nurses, medical officers, and national-level staff, registering for the event. Following self-introductions and the establishment of training rules, the course objectives were presented. A pre-test assessed participants' initial knowledge of pharmacovigilance, revealing a general understanding while highlighting the need for more comprehensive training.

The first session featured a presentation on the importance of monitoring medicine safety, explaining how it contributes to patient safety, safer medicines, and overall public health. Subsequent presentations covered topics such as passive versus active surveillance, reportable side effects, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in ensuring medicine safety, efficacy, and quality.



An interactive practical session encouraged active participation through case-based questions, fostering engagement among participants. The second day focused on recent developments in drug-resistant TB management and emerging trends in HIV treatment, highlighting statistics and common adverse events associated with these treatments.

The final day included discussions on various reporting tools available at the national pharmacovigilance center (i.e. Therapeutic Information and Pharmacovigilance Centre – TIPC)

for reporting adverse events, medication errors, and product quality issues. A practical session allowed participants to work in groups on case studies, enhancing their understanding through collaborative learning. The training concluded with a presentation on the importance of reporting medication errors, reinforcing the significance of transparency and communication in healthcare.

A post-test conducted at the end of the training demonstrated significant improvements in participants' knowledge, showcasing the effectiveness of the program and the engagement of those involved.

In conclusion, the National Pharmacovigilance Training was a critical initiative that not only enhanced the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals but also fostered collaboration between the public and private sectors. By equipping participants with the tools and understanding necessary for effective pharmacovigilance, the training contributes to safer medication practices and improved patient outcomes in the healthcare system.

