NATIONAL DRUG AUTHORITY
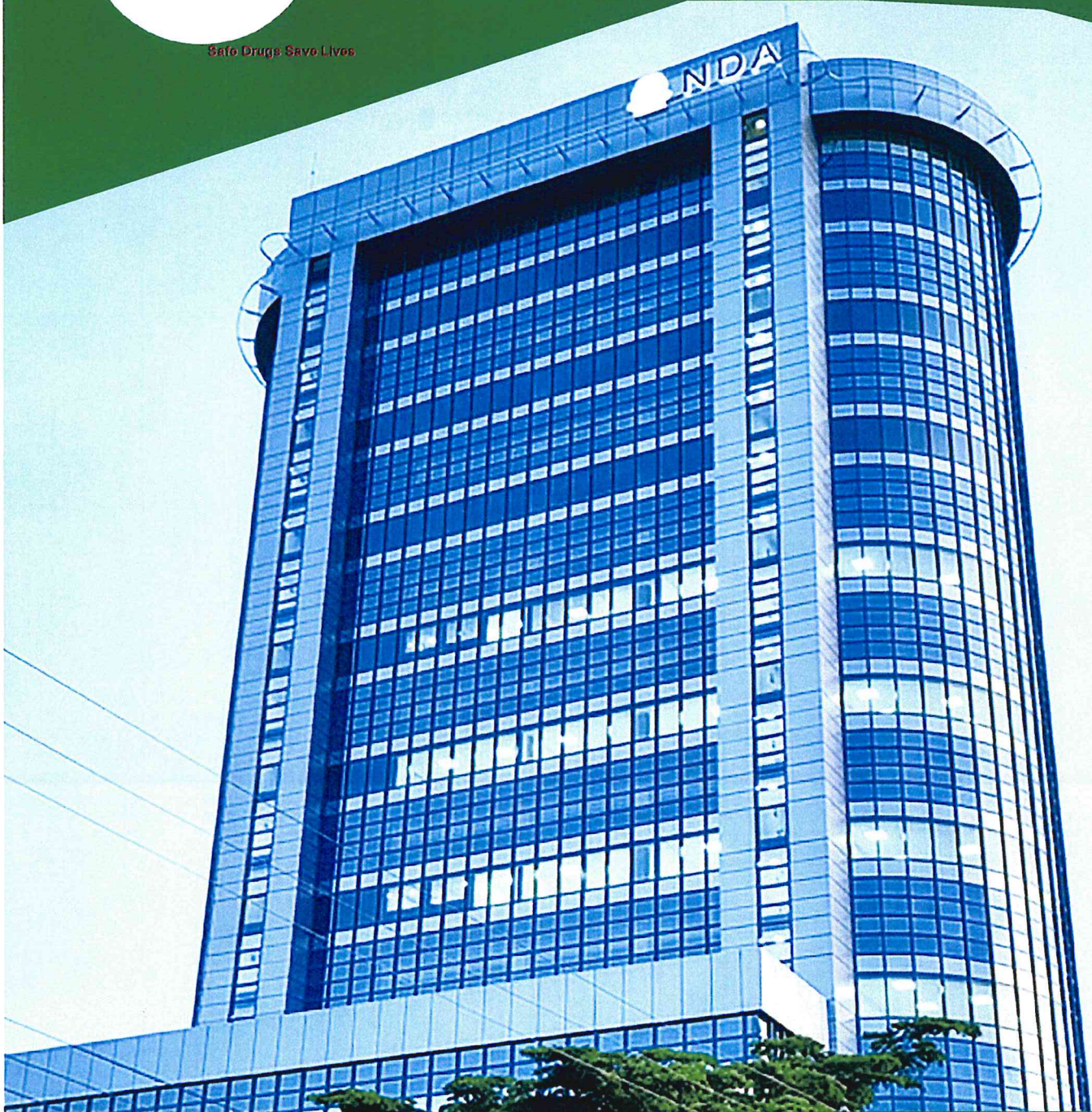
Safe Drugs Save Lives

NDA

NATIONAL DRUG AUTHORITY PHARMACOVIGILANCE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2023/24 -2024/25

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADR	Adverse Drug Reaction
AE	Adverse Effect
CME	Continuing Medical Education
CRO	Contract Research Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
HCWs	Healthcare Workers
MAHs	Market Authorization Holders
MoH	Ministry of Health
MTC	Medical Treatment Centre
NDA	National Drug Authority
NDPA	National Drug Policy and Authority
NMRA	National Medicines Regulatory Authority
NPC	National Pharmacovigilance Centre
PLWH	Persons Living with HIV
PV	Pharmacovigilance
PWD	People with Disability
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHO-UMC	World Health Organisation −Uppsala Monitoring Centre

FOREWORD

In our relentless pursuit of ensuring patient safety and rational drug use, the National Drug Authority (NDA) presents its Pharmacovigilance (PV) Communication Strategy — a cornerstone in our commitment to safeguarding public health and improving healthcare quality within Uganda

Our PV Communication Strategy stands not merely as a compliance requirement but as a moral commitment, ensuring patient safety and ethical medicine use in an era of global information flow.

At its core, this strategy embodies NDA's values of transparency, accountability, and patient-centricity. It outlines our proactive approach to monitoring adverse drug reactions (ADRs), capturing real-time data, and disseminating crucial information to stakeholders. Moreover, it underscores our dedication to incorporating patient experiences into regulatory decisions, thereby shaping drug use in Uganda.

We recognize that Pharmacovigilance is a collective effort, by all stakeholders together, we form a vigilant and caring network committed to upholding the highest standards of patient safety and rational drug use.

This strategy is not a static document but an adaptable and evolving framework, poised to address the dynamic technological and healthcare environment. It aligns with NDA's strategic interests, fostering PV capacity building, policy enhancement, collaborations, and awareness creation.

I extend an invitation to all stakeholders to leverage this strategy to innovate and amplify the impact of PV communication on patient safety, trust, and healthcare quality.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to all stakeholders whose dedication and partnership contributed to the development of this vital PV Communication Strategy. Your unwavering commitment is integral to our shared endeavour.

For God and My Country

Sincerely

Dr. Medard Bitekyerezo

Chairman

National Drug Authority

It ought to be noted that Pharmacovigilance is a collaborative effort, and the success of this communication strategy is a testament to the dedication and expertise of all stakeholders

PREFACE

I am pleased to introduce the National Drug Authority's (NDA) latest initiative: the Communication Strategy for Pharmacovigilance. This strategy, distinct from our existing communication guide, is a dedicated framework designed to achieve a singular purpose – to elevate awareness, promote vigilant reporting, and ensure the safe use of medicines within Uganda.

At the heart of NDA's mandate lies the commitment to safeguard public through the National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPC). This strategy stands as a testament to our continuous efforts to reinforce patient safety by enhancing communication channels and practices.

Embedded within our Strategic and Implementation Action Plan 2020/21-2024/25 is a pivotal emphasis on stakeholder awareness, engagement, and collaboration. The Pharmacovigilance Strategy for Uganda 2019 aligns with this commitment, pinpointing collaboration, information exchange, visibility, and awareness as focal points for advancing Pharmacovigilance.

This tailored communication strategy fills a crucial gap by providing guidance on recognizing adverse drug reactions, identifying suspicious products, reporting side effects, and establishing mechanisms for user feedback. It complements our existing tools, emphasizing the evolving landscape of Pharmacovigilance.

We recognize that the success of this strategy hinges on the active involvement of diverse stakeholders. We call upon the Ministry of Health, Policy Makers, Local Leaders, Development Partners, Civil Society, Pharmaceutical Industries, Healthcare Professionals, Patients, Caregivers, the Media, and the General Public to join hands in championing Pharmacovigilance.

Together, let us cultivate a safer, healthier Uganda

Sincerely

David Nahamya
Secretary to the Authority

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The National Drug Authority (NDA) extends its heartfelt appreciation to the individuals and organizations whose dedication and collaboration were instrumental in shaping the Pharmacovigilance Communication Strategy 2023/24-2024/25. This strategy stands as a testament to our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of patients and healthcare professionals in the use of pharmaceutical products.

Aligned with our institution's Strategic and Implementation Action Plan 2020/21-2024/25, this strategy outlines NDA's principles, objectives, and tactics for effective Pharmacovigilance communication. It is intended to benefit a diverse audience, including our PV team, healthcare professionals, government organizations, patients and caregivers, manufacturers and pharmaceuticals, the media, and the general public.

We express our profound gratitude to the following individuals and groups whose collaborative efforts were invaluable in crafting this comprehensive communication strategy:

- We are indebted to the healthcare professionals and pharmacists whose vigilant reporting of adverse events and insightful real-world use of drugs and devices greatly enhanced our strategy.

- To the patients and caregivers, your invaluable feedback and shared experiences significantly improved our engagement approach. We deeply appreciate your engagement, which has been crucial in shaping our strategy.

- We acknowledge the guidance and expertise provided by government organizations, which have played a pivotal role in shaping of our PV communication strategy through their knowledge of policies, standards, and frameworks.

- Our sincere gratitude to our industry partners for their collaboration and expertise, which have been invaluable in refining our PV communication strategy.

- We value the input and advocacy efforts from professional and advocacy groups, enriching our strategy with a more patient-centric approach and facilitating continuous learning and improvement.

- Our gratitude goes to the dedicated members of the Pharmacovigilance team, including; Julius Mayengo, David Walusimbi, Emmaculate Kwikiriza, Ian Migusa, Joanitah Atuhaire, Francis Odipiyo, Mwesigwa Douglas, Sophie Nyende and Ismail Ntale, for their integral role in monitoring adverse drug reactions.

- Other NDA departments - Legal, Procurement, and Communication teams - for their contributions in executing the PV communication strategy.

We hope this strategy will serve as a guiding light for NDA, particularly the National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPC), and all strategic stakeholders involved in Pharmacovigilance.

Together, we contribute significantly to advancing the field of Pharmacovigilance.

Sincerely

Helen Byomire Ndagije, PhD, FISoP
Director, Product Safety

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Drug Authority (NDA), mandated to safeguard public health, emphasizes drug safety and quality. A key aspect is the Directorate of Product Safety, which prioritizes Pharmacovigilance (PV) – identifying, understanding, and managing drug-related issues.

Aligned with NDA's strategic plans 2020/21-2024/25, the PV strategy emphasizes collaboration, information sharing, and stakeholder engagement. Its core aim is to improve communication among PV stakeholders and promote patient safety and rational drug use.

To enhance awareness and education, the strategy targets effective communication with healthcare professionals, patients, caregivers, the pharmaceutical sector, and the public. Objectives include disseminating information, fostering informed decisions, reducing anxiety around drug hazards, and improving professionals' communication skills on adverse drug reactions (ADRs).

Challenges like limited language diversity in communication, Kampala-centric awareness efforts, and gaps in medical training on PV were identified. The strategy proposes a national guideline for PV communication, emphasizing the need for diverse language usage, wider outreach, and dedicated training modules in medical education.

The strategy suggests a mix of traditional and innovative communication approaches while acknowledging resource constraints. Success relies on the commitment of the PV implementation team and NDA's communication unit, emphasizing staff sensitization, continued community dialogues on ADR reporting and media engagement.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The National Drug Authority (NDA), established in 1993, safeguards public and animal health by ensuring the safety and quality of accessible medicines, vaccines, and medical devices. The governance structure includes the NDA board, the Authority led by the Secretary, and several directorates, including; Product Assessment, Laboratory Services, Inspectorate, Veterinary Services, Corporate Services, and Human Resources.

The National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPC), housed within the Directorate of Product Safety is responsible for monitoring medicine safety by analyzing reported cases of adverse drug reactions, collects incident information, communicates risk mitigation strategies, and ensures uniform ADR messaging.

Pharmacovigilance (PV) involves detecting, understanding, and mitigating drug-related problems through data collection and communication of risk mitigation strategies to stakeholders across healthcare levels. The NDA operates within international, regional, and national frameworks and guidelines, emphasizing collaboration, information exchange, and stakeholder engagement.

The PV strategy aligns with NDA's focus areas of stakeholder engagement, collaboration, information exchange, visibility, and awareness creation. It emphasizes harmonizing activities among stakeholders, raising PV awareness, and encouraging ADR reporting to enhance patient safety and rational drug use in Uganda.

NDA's regulatory responsibilities including the Strategic Action Plan and Pharmacovigilance Strategy, align with international, regional and national policies such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Africa Agenda 2063, EAC Vision 2050 and Vision 2040, include overseeing drug regulation, research, local production, and ensuring rational drug use through professional training and guideline dissemination.

The PV system, integral to safety, involves various stakeholders like regulatory authorities, manufacturers, health facilities, and public health programs, aiming to ensure safe and effective medical product use.

1.2 Situation Analysis

This strategy is anchored in evidence generated during the PV communication situation analysis conducted between August – September 2023. Its goal was to assess NDA's communication systems, engagement with stakeholders, crisis readiness, and adherence to legal obligations. The aim was to enhance communication for better relationships and efficiency. The situation analysis was conducted through document reviews, interviews, focus groups, and workshops.

The following are highlights of the findings;

The status of Pharmacovigilance (PV) in Uganda underscores patient safety incidents and their consequences, particularly adverse drug reactions (ADRs), which significantly impact health. Globally, unsafe healthcare leads to substantial harm and deaths annually, emphasizing the critical need for a robust PV system. However, underreporting of ADRs remains a major challenge, despite their significant implications for public health.

Efforts are underway to educate healthcare professionals and the media about patient safety incidents, aiming for responsible reporting. The Global Patient Safety Action Plan stresses collaboration and principles like patient engagement, data analysis, evidence translation, context-based policymaking, and fostering a safety-oriented healthcare culture. These principles underline the vital role of effective communication in achieving patient safety objectives.

The government and political leadership have actively engaged in communicating health-related matters during various disease outbreaks, emphasizing disease prevention and public health during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, Ebola, Cholera, Malaria, and HIV/AIDS. However, attention to adverse drug reactions and medicine safety in health promotion efforts has been limited.

Multiple documents exist outlining global and national provisions for health communications, but they lack coordination and guidelines for effective health communication in Uganda. While a National Health Communication Strategy has been established to bridge this gap, it does not adequately include Pharmacovigilance (PV) communication.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has a department dedicated to Health Promotion, Education, and Strategic Communication (HEPC) overseeing multisectoral health promotion programs. However, the Health Management Information System (HMIS) lacks provisions for reporting adverse events or safe medicine use.

The Global Patient Safety Action Plan emphasizes patient empowerment, health worker training, information flow, and multisectoral collaboration, supporting safer health care systems.

The National Drug Authority (NDA) has provisions in its core policy frameworks that show commitment to effective information sharing, including strategies, guidelines, and operational frameworks for internal and external communication, media relations, crisis communication, and branding.

Identified communication gaps include limited public knowledge on PV, lack of coordination among stakeholders, language barriers in communication, inadequate awareness of policies and regulations on patient safety and drug use, and limited communication beyond the Kampala region.

The key recommendation from the situation analysis which has also informed the formulation of this strategy is that;

- Establish an overarching communication strategy specifically incorporating PV within NDA. This strategy should guide other guidelines and communication strategies within the Authority.

- Translate communication materials into various local languages used in Uganda to ensure accessibility and understanding across different regions.

- Consider special groups such as children, women, and people with disabilities in communication strategies, deploying channels best suited for these groups.

- Foster greater coordination and collaboration among PV stakeholders to manage and coordinate awareness campaigns for wider national impact

- Expand communication activities beyond Kampala to reach a broader audience across various regions in Uganda.

- Incorporate PV education into healthcare teaching curricula for healthcare practitioners, emphasizing skills for educating patients and caregivers about reporting adverse drug reactions.

- Allocate appropriate budgets for PV communication efforts to enhance visibility, consistent information flow, and feedback mechanisms.

- Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring of stakeholder opinions, views, and attitudes, utilizing feedback for improved communication strategies.

- Identify and use suitable communication channels that effectively deliver messages to different stakeholders, considering their characteristics, dynamics, and interests.

- Address the limited staffing for communication by potentially appointing a specific communications officer focusing on PV, considering its national significance.

- Conduct targeted communication activities to prioritize and popularize PV and related activities, aiming to improve public awareness about adverse drug reactions and reporting processes.

- Enhance stakeholders' understanding and awareness of PV and its significance through more extensive communication efforts.

1.3 Benefits of Evidence-based Communication Strategy for Pharmacovigilance

Communication approaches which are evidence-based are a beneficial investment for any institution. An evidence-based Pharmacovigilance (PV) communication strategy offers an array of invaluable benefits in ensuring patient safety and fostering informed decision-making within the healthcare landscape.

By grounding communication efforts in empirical data and validated evidence, such a strategy becomes a cornerstone for credibility, reliability, and trust among stakeholders.

It enables targeted, precise messaging that resonates with diverse audiences, ensuring that information about adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and medication safety is conveyed accurately and comprehensively.

Moreover, an evidence-based approach facilitates the identification of effective communication channels, thereby optimizing the reach and impact of PV initiatives. This strategy empowers healthcare professionals, patients, and the public with credible information, cultivates a culture of transparency, encourages reporting of ADRs, and ultimately contributes to enhanced patient outcomes and a safer healthcare environment.

2.0 THE PHARMACOVIGILANCE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the PV communication strategy is to ensure timely, clear and effective communication, education and engagement with all PV stakeholders. The strategy seeks to facilitate the education of the public on adverse drug reactions, how to identify suspicious products, reporting drug side effects and mechanism through which users of medicine can give feedback to NDA in case of side effects.

2.2 Objectives

The primary objective

This communication strategy aims to proactively communicate patient safety, educate stakeholders on safety initiatives, and cultivate a culture of transparency and trust within the Pharmacovigilance (PV) domain.

2.2.1 Specific objectives

- Cultivate Safety Awareness: Raise awareness and foster a safety culture among stakeholders regarding Pharmacovigilance initiatives and practices.
- Facilitate Reporting: Encourage and streamline the reporting of adverse events linked to medications for swift responses.
- Enhance Stakeholder Engagement: Improve timely, effective communication, education, and engagement within the Pharmacovigilance sector.
- Boost Professional competence; Collaborate with training institutions to elevate medical professionals' competence in communicating adverse events.
- Harmonize Communication Structures: Establish synchronized structures for harmonizing communication among PV stakeholders for seamless information flow.
- Continuous Information Dissemination: Consistently develop, review, and distribute tailored Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials.
- Promote Safe Medical Use: Provide information empowering informed decisions on safe drug use, reducing fear and enhancing understanding of potential hazards.

2.3 Target Audience

	STAKEHOLDER	CORE ROLE
1	Policy level stakeholders namely: • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries • Ministry of Water and Environment • Parliament • Ministry of ICT and National Guidance • Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives	• Passing laws and policies • Advocacy for Vet and health actions • Performance monitoring • Enabling enactment of law • Development and dissemination of communication guidelines

	STAKEHOLDER	CORE ROLE
2	Regulatory Authorities • National drug Authority • Uganda National Bureau of Standards • Uganda Communication Commission • National Medical Stores	• Monitoring the safety of drugs and ensure compliance with safety standards • Oversight, regulation and management of players within and outside the health sector to complement regulatory action of NDA • Benchmarking of actions • Regulation of media players • Supervise and regulate respective professional practices in the health sector
3	Healthcare Professionals • Doctors, Clinical Officers, Nurses, pharmacists, Veterinary practitioners, Marketing Authorization Holders (MAHs) and other healthcare practitioners • Students of Medicine, Veterinary and pharmacy • Herbalists • Nutritionists	• Encourage adherence to safety protocols and encourage reporting of incidents • Ensuring patient safety and effectiveness of medication • Reports adverse events to the responsible regulatory authority • Detection of potential safety signals • Collection of data on the safety and efficacy of drugs • Maintaining accurate and comprehensive patient data • Patient education on medication and related potential risks
4	International and regional bodies with whom NDA works to achieve shared goals • World Health Organisation (WHO) • Centre for Disease Control (CDC)	• Benchmarking of actions • Complement regulatory actions of NDA • Provision of demand-driven technical assistance and inputs into the implementation of NDA's of NDA's focus area
5	Pharmaceutical Industry • Pharmaceuticals manufacturers, distributors and warehouses • Pharmacists and pharmacy owners • Pharmaceutical regulatory bodies	• Provision of quality drugs and health products on the market that are safe, and efficacious. (Importers, manufacturers, retail outlets, medical facilities, health marketing agencies, traditional medicine promoters). • Ensure a shared commitment to patient safety by reporting ADRs to support PV efforts

	STAKEHOLDER	CORE ROLE
6	**Professional Bodies, Civil Society and Patient Organisations** • Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda • Uganda Medical Association • Uganda Alliance of Patients Organisation (UAPO) • Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) • Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development (HEPS- Uganda) • National Herbalists Association • National Council of Traditional Healers and Herbalists Association (NACOTHA)	• Resource mobilization • Providing and participating in research, community and social mobilization, advocacy, and capacity building including human resource development, logistical support, and technical assistance to complement regulatory actions and enhance compliance • Ensuring proper utilization of resources and accountability • Oversight, regulation and management of health and Vet practitioners to complement regulatory actions that enhance compliance
7	Academia and Research Organisations • The Department of Pharmacy, Makerere University • The Department of Pharmacy, Mbarara University of Science and Technology • The Pharmacy School, Kampala International University	• Providing or participating in research, advocacy, and capacity building including human resource development and technical assistance
8	Patients and caregivers and the General Public • Patients, including those receiving treatment in healthcare facilities and through community health programs • Caregivers o • General public	• Take care of their health, and practice appropriate behaviours aimed at seeking quality, safe and efficacious drugs and health products. • Report adverse reactions to healthcare providers or regulatory authorities • Advocating for safer medications through consumer and patient groups
9	The Media • Print media • Broadcast media • Online media • Health journalists • Social media • Influencers	• Information dissemination on patient safety • Influence public perception and policy by increasing visibility on ADRs and medication safety • Through investigative reporting, media can unearth and expose issues affecting drug safety thus ensuring effective service delivery and accountability • Reporting on public health

2.4 Key Messages

The messages will revolve around the following nine areas;

1. Awareness and Education: Increase awareness and provide educational resources on Pharmacovigilance to enhance knowledge and understanding.

2. Patient Safety: Emphasize the importance of Pharmacovigilance in ensuring patient safety and well-being.

3. Medication errors: medication errors by health professionals and patients or caregivers, preventable, adulterations, labelling issues.

4. Reporting adverse events and Accountability: emphasize the importance of incident reporting and encourage healthcare professionals and patients to report suspected adverse drug reactions promptly to enable investigation and accountability.

5. Confidentiality and Protection: Assure stakeholders of the confidentiality of their reports and the importance of their contribution to safeguarding public health.

6. Patient involvement: encourage patients to actively participate in their care and speak up about concerns.

7. Collaboration and Partnerships: highlight the need for collaboration between healthcare professionals, patients, the pharmaceutical industry and regulatory authorities to strengthen Pharmacovigilance activities.

8. Continuous improvement: highlight ongoing efforts to improve safety protocols, policies, and procedures.

9. Transparency: promote open and honest communication regarding safety incidents and their resolutions.

10. Product Quality

11. Drug Resistance.

12. Drug and substance abuse and misuse.

13. Adverse events

14. Street drugs visa vi alcohol

15. Misinformation/disinformation

16. Enforcement

2.5 The Strategic Approach

To achieve the objectives of the PV communication strategy, the following strategic approaches are proposed;

- Staffing for PV communication efforts: Considering its national importance, there is to increase the number of personnel in the Communication team with some of them specifically focusing on PV communication. There would be a need to allocate additional resources for the function including procuring of requisite equipment.

- Geographically Diverse Awareness Activities: Extend PV awareness beyond Kampala by conducting regional activities to ensure broader impact throughout the Country.

- Translation and localization of PV materials: Translating materials into local languages to cater for diverse populations in different regions of the country to ensure broader accessibility.

- Inclusive Communication for Special Groups: Tailor communication to accommodate special groups like children, women and people with disabilities, employing suitable channels for effective message delivery.

- Capacity building for staff on communication skills: Conduct communication skills training for members of staff to ensure effective communication.

- Curriculum Integration for Healthcare Professionals: Introduce a dedicated PV module within medical training to enhance knowledge and skills among healthcare practitioners, focusing on communication to and educating patients and caregivers on ADR reporting.

- Enhance partnerships and synergies: foster collaboration among PV stakeholders for coordinated and impactful awareness campaigns, ensuring nationwide reach.

- Wider Public Communication by Supply Chain Stakeholders: Encourage pharmacists and manufacturers to broaden communication beyond professional circles to the general public about adverse drug reactions, ensuring responsible information dissemination beyond sales concerns.
- Allocating sufficient budget to PV Communication; Allocate appropriate budgets aligned with market rates for media advertising, investing in PV visibility and continuous information flow to stakeholders.
- Corporate social responsibility: this could be implemented through an array of activities including tree planting, supporting community clubs, school engagements, and medical camps.
- Endorsements by popular personalities of some of the PV campaign messages for increased visibility and wide reach.
- Document good practices and lessons learnt to enhance learning and sharing.

2.6 Key Communication Channels

Pharmacovigilance communication can achieve a broader reach and effectiveness through the utilization of a combination of channels, tailored to the target audience's preferences and accessibility. The methods would include the following;
- Mass Media: Through public service announcements, talk shows and dedicated segments. Print media including; newspapers, magazines, brochures and posters etc
- Digital and Online platforms: these include; websites, social media campaigns, e-newsletters, blogs, online articles and collaborating with influencers.
- Mobile Apps: Developing user-friendly apps for reporting adverse drug reactions or providing information on safe medication use.
- Leadership engagements, Community involvment and school outreach: these would include workshops and seminars for seminars in communities, schools, hospitals and clinics. This could also include community events like health clinics, and health fairs amongst others.
- Training programmes and education materials: Including PV modules in medical and pharmacy school curriculums, distributing brochures, pamphlets and posters to healthcare facilities.
- Partnerships and Collaboration: partnerships with civil society and advocacy groups on PV awareness creation. This would include collaborating with pharmaceutical companies and industry stakeholders for joint awareness campaigns.
- Multimedia Content: creating informative videos, webinars or podcasts on PV-related topics. This would include sharing visually appealing and easy-to-understand information i.e. infographics.
- Hotlines and Helplines: Establishing dedicated phone lines or helplines for reporting adverse drug reactions or seeking information.
- Documentation and publications of Information Education and Communication (IEC) Materials: IEC materials play a crucial role in PV communication. These could include; brochures, leaflets, posters, pamphlets and flyers, booklets, visual content,
- Media engagement: This would include; press releases, media briefings and conferences, media tours, media partnerships for media campaigns.

2.7 Crisis Communication Guidelines

PV communication is essentially a risk or crisis communication endeavour because of the need to maintain safety, ensure trust and credibility, and minimise the impact of adverse events related to medicine use. Common crisis and risk scenarios include;
- Drug related crisis
- Adverse reactions
- Medicine recall
- contamination
- •Issues of public health and trust

- During epidemics
- When reactions are contrary to what was claimed by professionals
- Misinformation/disinformation scenarios

The expected crisis and communication response would include the following;
- Need for timely response to safety issues: In the event of adverse drug reactions or unexpected safety concerns with medications, swift and effective communication is vital. It helps disseminate accurate information promptly, minimizing potential harm and addressing public concerns.
- Maintaining trust and credibility: Transparent and reliable communication during a crisis maintains trust between stakeholders. It demonstrates a commitment to patient safety and responsible medication oversight, which is crucial for public confidence in regulatory bodies and healthcare providers
- Preventing panic and misinformation: Rapid response and clear communication can prevent panic and misinformation. It ensures that accurate and verified information reaches the public, mitigating the spread of false or alarming rumours
- Guiding stakeholders: Clear crisis communication guides healthcare workers, patients, and the public on how to respond or manage the situation, ensuring a coordinated effort and minimizing confusion.
- Regulatory Compliance: Many regulatory bodies require transparent and timely communication in the event of safety issues to comply with standards and obligations related to patient safety.

2.8 Metrics for Evaluation

The PV communication strategy incorporates ongoing monitoring and evaluation to gauge its effectiveness, ensuring continuous improvement. The evaluation focuses on various measures:

- Incident Reporting: Tracking ADRs reported, their resolution timelines, and investigation.
- Patient feedback: Analyzing satisfaction scores and feedback related to safety concern.
- Web analytics: Monitoring traffic and engagement on the patient safety website.
- Social media metrics: Measuring engagement, reach, and sentiment of safety-related posts.
- Staff compliance: Assessing staff adherence through audits and surveys of safety protocols.
- Community engagement: Evaluating attendance and feedback from workshops and events.
- Media coverage: Monitoring media reports on safety incidents and organizational responses.
- Public survey on ADR knowledge: Assessing public knowledge levels on ADRs through surveys.

Additionally, establishing feedback mechanisms is crucial for strategy enhancement. Key performance indicators (KPIs) like audience reach, engagement, conversion rates, and sentiment analysis are essential to gauge success

By implementing this comprehensive communication strategy, the National Drug Authority in to effectively engage stakeholders, raise awareness about Pharmacovigilance, and enhance patient safety by actively monitoring and reporting adverse drug reactions.

2.9 Communication Strategy Implementation Matrix

THEMATIC MESSAGE AREA	MEANS OF REACH (CHANNELS)	AUDIENCE (STAKEHOLDER)	FREQUENCY
1. Awareness and Education: Increase awareness and provide educational resources on Pharmacovigilance to enhance knowledge and understanding.	• Online platform: • Social media campaigns • Healthcare workshops and Seminars • Printed Materials • Collaboration with Media outlets • Mobile Apps and SMS Campaigns • Partnerships and Outreach • Community Engagement • ELearning	NDA MoH/health promotion, education and communication NMS Academia/health professional training institutions Hospitals/health facility/ CSO VHTs	weekly
2. Patient Safety: Emphasize the importance of Pharmacovigilance in ensuring patient safety and well-being.	• Patient education Programs • Online patient portals: • Patient support groups • Social Media groups: • Pharmacist and Healthcare Provider Interaction • Printed materials in Healthcare facilities • Mobile Applications and SMS campaigns • Community Awareness Events • Collaboration with patient advocacy Groups • Media outreach	NDA MoH (SCAPP – standards compliance, accreditation and Patient Protection) NMS Manufacturers (Pv focal persons, safety quality/ client charter)	Quarterly
3. Medication errors: medication errors by health professionals and patients or caregivers, preventable, adulterations, labelling issues	• Healthcare professional training programs • Medical Journals and Publications • Continuing Medical Education (CME) Programs • Internal Communication in Healthcare Facilities • Patient Education Materials • Collaboration with Pharmacies • Telemedicine and Virtual Consultations • Public Service Announcements (PSAs): • Social Media campaigns • Regulatory Authority Engagement	MoH (department of pharmaceuticals and natural medicine) Health facilities NDA Professional associations - Uganda medical association	When error occurs

THEMATIC MESSAGE AREA	MEANS OF REACH (CHANNELS)	AUDIENCE (STAKEHOLDER)	FREQUENCY
4. Reporting adverse events and Accountability: emphasize the importance of incident reporting and encourage healthcare professionals and patients to report suspected adverse drug reactions promptly to enable investigation and accountability.	• Healthcare Provider Training Programs • Patient-facing materials • Medical Associations and Conferences • Continuing Medical Education (CME) modules • Regulatory Authority Collaboration • Hospital and Clinic communication channels. • Online reporting portals • Public awareness campaigns • Collaboration with pharmacies • Patient Support Groups	NDA MoH (dept of pharmaceuticals and natural medicine) Health facilities/Drug outlets Patients Market authorization holders/manufacturers	Continuously
5. Confidentiality and Protection: Assure stakeholders of the confidentiality of their reports and the importance of their contribution to safeguarding public health.	• Clear communication in reporting forms • Information leaflets and brochures • Webinars and Training sessions: • Regular communication by Regulatory Authorities • Online Resources and FAQs • Patient-centric approach • Collaboration with Data Protection Agencies: • Testimonies and success stories • Engagement through social media • Stakeholder engagement workshops	MoH/ Health professional bodies /Client charter NDA Health professionals Research bodies (UNCSt and Ethics committees)	Continuously
6. Patient involvement: encourage patients to actively participate in their care and speak up about concerns.	• Patient education workshops • Patient portals and apps • Patient support groups • Patient-centric communication materials • Healthcare provider collaboration • Social media engagement • Feedback mechanisms • Community Outreach programs • Personalized communication: • Patient centres care approach	NDA Consumer /patient groups CSOs NMS Health facilities MoH Religious leaders VHTs (review role)	Continuously

THEMATIC MESSAGE AREA	MEANS OF REACH (CHANNELS)	AUDIENCE (STAKEHOLDER)	FREQUENCY
7. Collaboration and Partnerships: highlight the need for collaboration between healthcare professionals, patients, the pharmaceutical industry and regulatory authorities to strengthen Pharmacovigilance activities.	- Collaborative workshops and conferences - Industry partnerships - Stakeholder forums - Cross sectoral committees - Information sharing - Multi stakeholder campaigns - Professional networks and associations - Collaborative training programs - Public-private partnerships - Advocacy and Awareness campaigns	Development partners WHO MoH MDAs	Bi-annually
8. Continuous improvement: highlight ongoing efforts to improve safety protocols, policies, and procedures.	- Regular progress updates - Internal training sessions. - Case studies and success stories - Open forums and town halls - Employee suggestions platforms - Quality improvement initiatives - Feedback mechanisms - Benchmarking and best practices - Recognition programs - Regular Audits and Assessments	MoH WHO Academia NDA	Bi-annually
9. Transparency: promote open and honest communication regarding safety incidents and their resolutions.	- Clear communication channels - Regular updates and reports - Open forums and Q&As. - Transparency in decision making - Timely responses - Case studies and examples - Plain Language and clarity - Stakeholder engagement - External verification - Transparency Reports	MoH (pharmacy division, vaccines dept/ UNEPI) NDA NMS Manufacturers	Continuously
10. Product Quality	- Public information portal - Regular announcements: - Advisory notices - Educational campaigns - Direct communication - Collaborative workshops - Clear labeling and packaging - Media engagement - Patient advocacy groups - Pharmacist education:	NDA Pharmaceutical Manufacturers MoH NMS Health facilities/drug outlets	Continuously

THEMATIC MESSAGE AREA	MEANS OF REACH (CHANNELS)	AUDIENCE (STAKEHOLDER)	FREQUENCY
11. Drug Resistance	• Educational campaigns: • Healthcare provider Education: • Public Health programs: • Social media and websites: • Community engagement: • School programs: • Medical Professional Networks: • Government Initiatives: • Patient Centred campaigns • Media Engagement:	MoH (Pv dept) Health facility NDA NMS Academia	Bi-annually
12. Drug and substance abuse and misuse	• Education Programs • Awareness campaigns • Collaboration with support groups • Healthcare provider training • Government Initiatives • Community Outreach • Hotlines and helplines • Pharmacist counseling • Digital platforms: Peer to peer education	MoH NDA police	Monthly
13. Adverse events	• Reporting systems • Educational campaigns • Healthcare provider outreach: reporting, and managing adverse events. • Patient engagement: Engage patients through patient forums, support groups, or online communities, emphasizing their role in reporting adverse events and providing clear instructions on how to do so. • Media engagement • Collaboration with Professional Bodies • Public awareness campaigns • Feedback mechanisms • Establish mechanisms to acknowledge and provide feedback • Multilingual Resources	NDA MoH (dept of pharmaceuticals and natural medicine) Health facilities/Drug outlets Patients Market authorization holders/manufacturers	Continuously

| THEMATIC MESSAGE AREA	MEANS OF REACH (CHANNELS)	AUDIENCE (STAKEHOLDER)	FREQUENCY
14. Street drugs visa vi alcohol.	• Educational campaigns • Public service announcements: Air PSAs on TV, radio, and online platforms to highlight the dangers of street drugs and emphasize the importance of avoiding them. • Community engagement • Online resources • Collaboration with local authorities • Youth engagement • Health provider education • Celebrities and influencers • Anonymous Hotlines and support services • Targeted messaging	MoH NDA police Media	Quarterly
15. Addressing misinformation/ disinformation	• Fact based campaigns • Education and awareness programs • Collaboration with experts • Interactive webinars or Q & A sessions • Frequent and transparent communication • Engagement on social media platforms • Use of infographics and visual content • Partnerships with trusted sources • Crisis communication plan • Community involvement and empowerment	MoH NDA NMS UCC Health professional Media (media houses, journalists, social media, influencers)	As and when they happen
16. Enforcement	• Regulatory guidance • Training programs • Direct communication • Webinars and online sessions • Collaboration with industry bodies • Case studies and reports • Media engagement • Stakeholder engagement platforms • Online portals and information hubs • Continuous updates	NDA Police Judiciary Local authorities	Continuously

SIDE EFFECTS OF Drugs /Medicine

INFORMATION EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC)
Materials for Pharmacovigilance (patient safety, rational drug use, adverse drug reactions and reporting ADRs.

SAMPLE IEC MATERIAL

Safe Drugs Save Lives
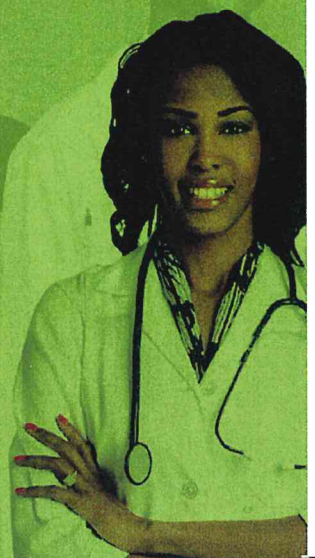
BROCHURES, PAMPHLETS, FLYERS AND LEAFLETS: these are printed materials, concise and visually appealing documents that provide information on specific topics. Brochures, pamphlets and flyers are often used to educate the public on health issues, safety guidelines and other important topics as suggested in the images below. Flyers and leaflets are however shorter and simpler, making them suitable for quick distribution.

POSTERS: posters are eye-catching visuals designed to convey key messages quickly. They are often used in public spaces like healthcare facilities and education settings to raise awareness about various issues.


BOOKLETS: Booklets are extensive printed material that provide in-depth information on a specific subject. They are often used for educational purposes such as providing guidelines for specific medicinal administration.
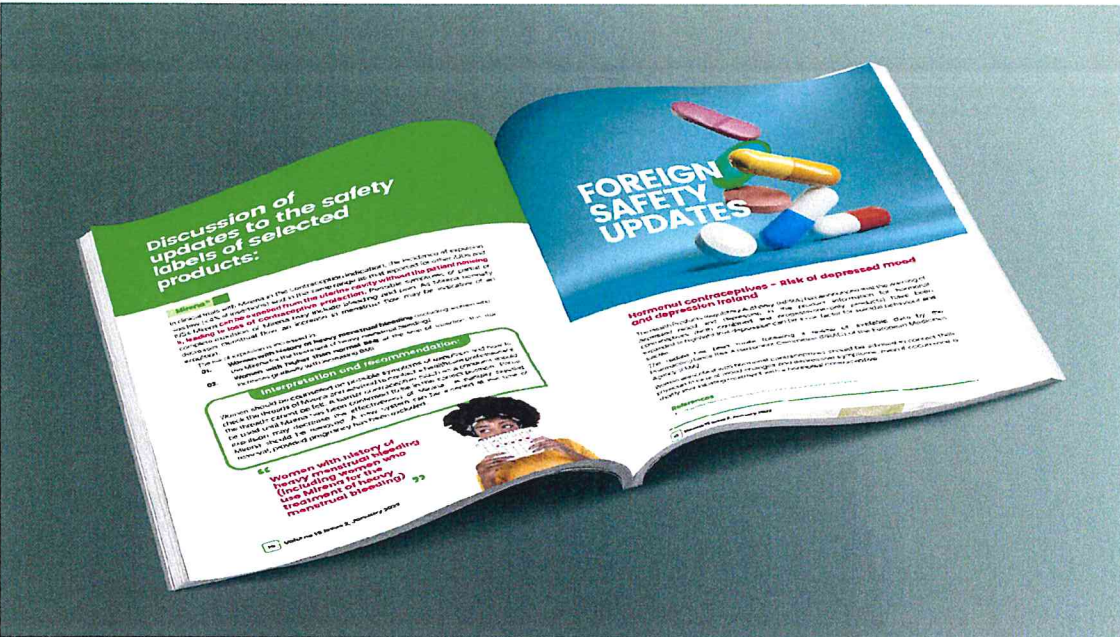
FLIP CHARTS: Flip charts are portable, large format materials with pages that can be flipped to reveal different content. They are commonly used for interactive presentations and training sessions.
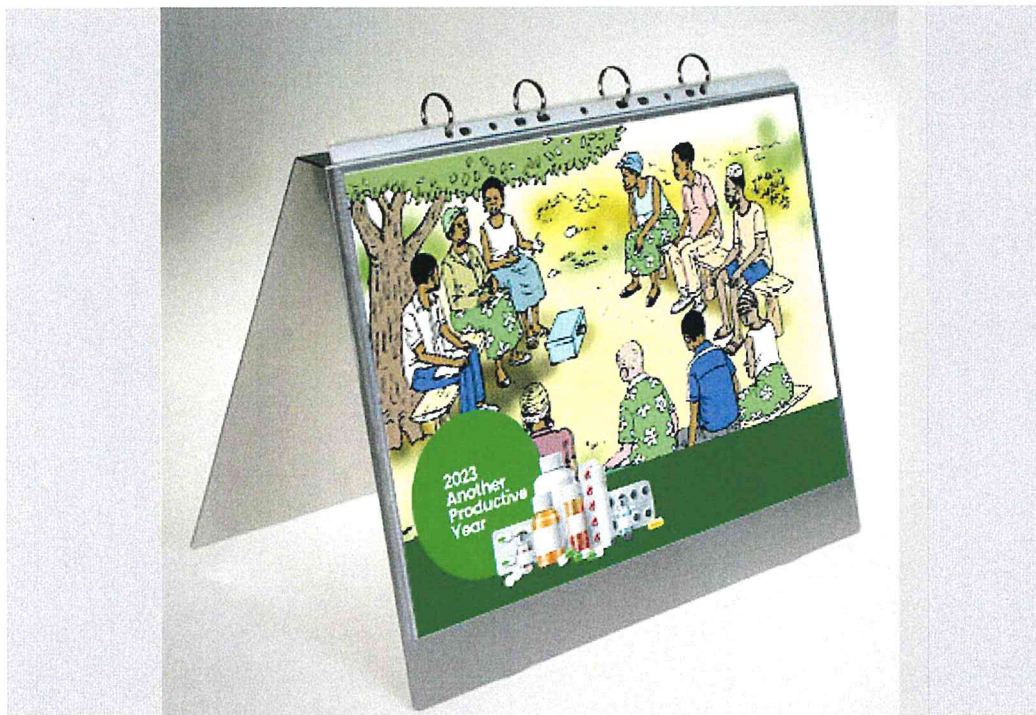
INFOGRAPHICS: Infographics use visual elements like charts, graphs and icons to present complex information in a visually appealing and easy to understand manner. They are effective for conveying statistics, processes and comparisons.
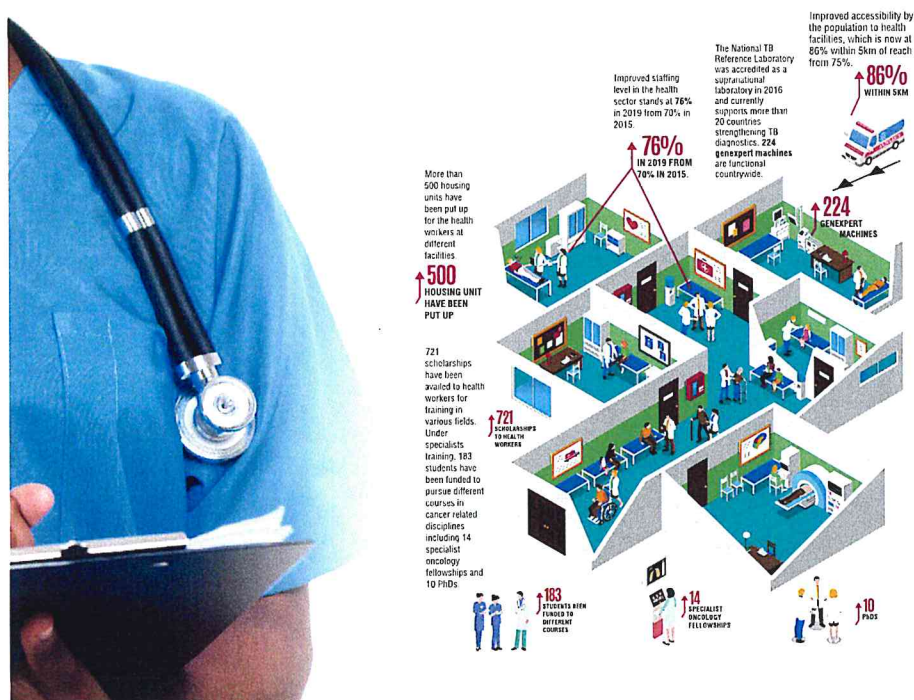
AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: These include videos, animations and audio recordings that use sound and visuals to deliver messages. They are particularly useful for conveying complex information or demonstrating procedures.
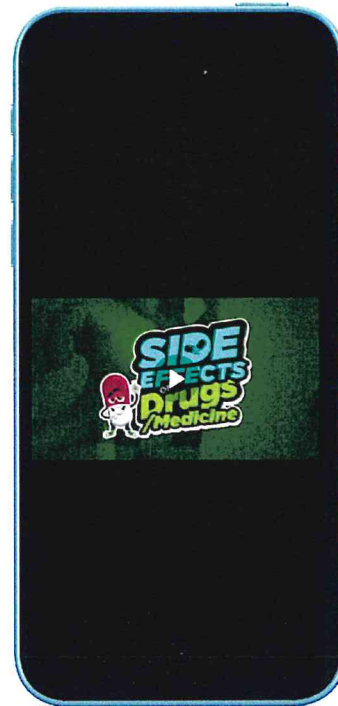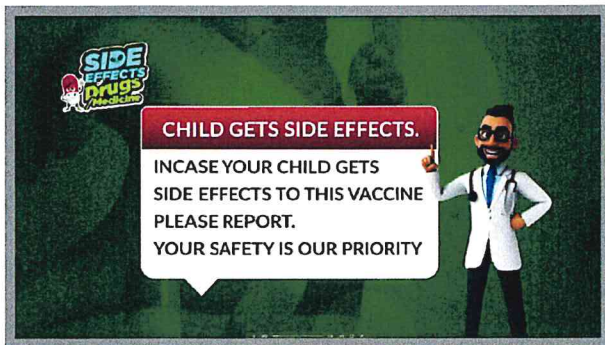
INTERACTIVE WEBSITES AND APPS: in the digital age, websites and mobile apps are powerful IEC tools. They can provide educational content, quizzes and resources to engage and inform.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Social media platforms are widely used for IEC campaigns. Posts, graphics and videos are shared on platforms like Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp, and Instagram to reach a broad audience quickly.
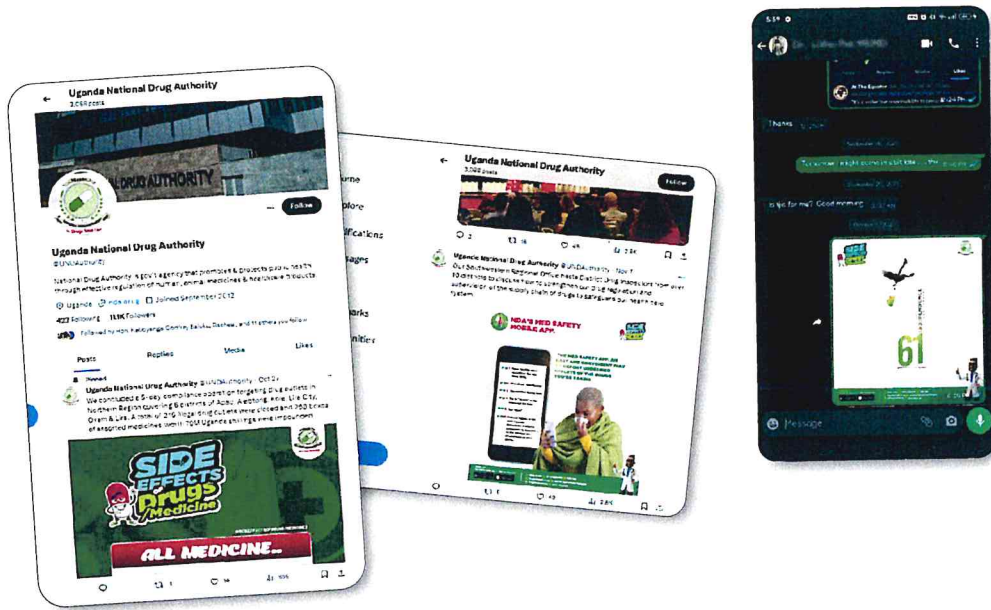
EDUCATIONAL GAMES AND SIMULATIONS: Games and simulations are interactive tools that engage users in the learning experience while conveying important information. They are often used for training and education.

CALENDARS AND PLANNERS: Calendars and planners can be customized to include health tips, safety guidelines or educational content for daily reference.

COMIC BOOKS AND STORYTELLING: Using storytelling through comic books or narratives is an engaging way to convey information, especially for younger audiences.

BRANDED MERCHANDISE: Branded items like t-shirts, aprons, umbrellas, hats, mugs, pens, lapel badges and flash disks among others with educational messages and logos can help spread awareness and reinforce key messages.

BILLBOARDS, SIGNAGE AND BANNERS: Large outdoor billboards and signs can effectively reach a wide audience, making them suitable for public awareness campaigns in high traffic areas. These may also include mobile billboards on public transport like buses and taxis amongst others.

RADIO AND PODCASTS: Audio broadcasts, including radio shows and podcasts, are used to disseminate information and promote discussions on various topics.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS: In person events, workshops and seminars serve as interactive IEC platforms where experts can engage with the community and provide education and information.

OUT DOOR & IN DOOR GAMES: Games are interactive tools that engage users in the learning experience while conveying important information. They are often used for training and education.

UGANDA

NATIONAL DRUG AUTHORITY

Safe Drugs Save Lives