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The Top Ten Global Health Supply Chain Issues: Perspectives from the Field

Revision 2

0. ABSTRACT

In the battle for global health, supply chains are often found wanting. Yet most of what is known about in-country pharmaceutical supply chains resides in the experiences of individual stakeholders, with limited amounts of this knowledge captured in technical reports and papers. This short communication taps into the collective experience and wisdom of global health supply chain professionals through interviews and surveys to identify and prioritize the top 10 global health pharmaceutical supply chain challenges: (1) lack of coordination, (2) inventory management, (3) absent demand information, (4) human resource dependency, (5) order management, (6) shortage avoidance, (7) expiration, (8) warehouse management, (9) temperature control, and (10) shipment visibility. As such, this work contributes to the foundational knowledge of global health pharmaceutical supply chains. These challenges must be addressed by researchers, policy makers, and practitioners alike if global pharmaceutical supply chains are to be developed and improved in emerging regions of the world.

<u>Keywords</u>: global health, health systems, humanitarian, disaster response, visibility, emerging markets, developing countries

1. Introduction

Heroes may win battles but it is capable supply chains that win wars. In the war against disease, supply chains are often found wanting. But exactly how are these supply chains wanting? And what should be done about it? This short communication brings together expert opinion to answer just such questions. To enable a better understanding of what the specific needs are to strengthen global health pharmaceutical delivery (GHPD) supply chains, we undertook interviews and surveys of professionals working in GHPD supply chains. Our premise is that from a reasonable sample of knowledgeable experts in the global health arena we can obtain a reasonable consensus of opinion on the key challenges in GHPD supply chains. From the interview and survey data, this communication identifies and prioritizes key GHPD supply chain challenges, and subsequently we develop a dependency model to determine the key underlying influences or drivers. This work informs research, policy, and practitioner agendas.