OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN HUMANITARIAN HEALTH RESEARCH

STAFFING

EXAMPLES OF CHALLENGES:

Staff being partially or completely unavailable for work, due to:
- staff turnover
- illness
- competing work priorities
- exposure to the stress of humanitarian disaster

Difficulties in identifying or hiring appropriate staff, due to:
- small pool of qualified applicants
- difficulty attracting staff due to competing projects
- complex salary negotiations.
- hiring underqualified individuals.

Health worker strikes or equivalent.

IMPACT OF CHALLENGES ON A STUDY

- delays or suspension of study activities
- difficulties in coordinating study activities and logistics
- difficulties in ensuring strong fidelity or quality control of study protocols and related activities
- difficulty carrying out more complex trainings and interventions
- staff being less able to operate independently, if at all
- shutdown of programmatic services and associated research activities

MITIGATING ACTIONS

- hiring new staff
- training existing staff
- develop specific material for training low-literacy study staff
- postponed study activities
- shifted to tasks such as analysis and training that could be performed while clinic staff were on strike
- used programme delivery staff for research activities
- change the study design from stepped-wedge to using historical data for control

For further details of Operational Challenges faced in R2HC-funded humanitarian research studies, please see the full report: Mitigating Operational Challenges in Humanitarian Health Research: the R2HC Experience (2020)