

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prioritization of livestock diseases by pastoralists in Oloitoktok Sub County, Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract

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Introduction

Livestock diseases are a big challenge for the livelihood of pastoralists in sub-Saharan Africa because they reduce livestock productivity and increase mortality. Based on the literature available there is limited understanding on how pastoralists prioritize these diseases in the context of their culture, ecosystems and livelihoods. A study was conducted to provide insights on lay prioritization of animal diseases by pastoralists in Kenya.

Methodology

A qualitative study was undertaken between March and July 2021. Thirty in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with community members to explore community attitudes on livestock diseases prioritization. Male and female livestock keepers were purposively selected and interviewed and they were all long-term residents of the area. Fourteen key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with professionals from different key sectors to provide detailed stakeholder perspectives on livestock diseases. The interviews were analyzed thematically using the QSR Nvivo software to identify the emerging themes related to the study objectives.

Results

The pastoralists prioritized livestock diseases based on effect on their economic wellbeing, cultural values and utilization of ecosystem services. There were gender variabilities in how diseases were prioritized among the pastoralists. Men cited high priority diseases as foot and mouth disease and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia due to their regular occurrence and effect on livelihood. Notably, women regarded coenurus as very important because it affected sheep and goats with a high mortality rate and lumpy skin disease because it rendered the meat from the carcasses inedible. Malignant catarrhal fever and trypanosomiasis