IMPROVING PHARMACY ACCESS TO QUALITY
ASSURED COVID-19 ANTIGEN TESTS IN VIET NAM

BACKGROUND
Access to affordable, quality assured rapid antigen tests (Ag-RDTs) is key to managing the COVID-19 pandemic response. As part of this, the World Health Organization Emergency Use Listing (WHO-EUL) is designed to expediate the availability of such tests through the assessment and listing of verified products.

In South-East Asia, local pharmacies are a critical source of COVID-19 testing and testing advice for the people and communities they serve. Recognizing their potential as a distribution channel for WHO-EUL Ag-RDTs, in early 2021, FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, came together with SwipeRx (formerly known as mClinica) to test the ability of a digital network of pharmacy professionals to improve access to WHO-EUL Ag-RDTs in Viet Nam.

WHY ARE PHARMACIES IMPORTANT?
• Convenient locations
• Long opening hours (even in lockdown)
• Fast, efficient services

UNDERSTANDING THE BASELINE
In September 2021, three WHO-EUL Ag-RDT brands were registered with the Vietnamese Ministry of Health. According to a digital survey of 426 pharmacy professionals, 29% stocked COVID-19 Ag-RDTs at the time data was collected. Data also showed that just 46% had been trained on any topic related to COVID-19, including testing.

MARKET ACTIVATION
Survey findings were used to develop and pilot a digital market activation programme encouraging pharmacies in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City to stock and promote WHO-EUL Ag-RDTs by:
• Raising awareness on the benefits of quality assured, WHO-EUL Ag-RDTs
• Supporting the professional development of pharmacists and students
• Providing key information on approved local test suppliers

RESULTS
Through SwipeRx, the following results were achieved in 4 months, beginning in December 2021:

57,004 app and social media accounts were exposed to digital education tools and supplier information

344 pharmacy professionals and students were educated about WHO-EUL Ag-RDTs in collaboration with the Ho Chi Minh City Pharmacy Association

10,294 WHO-EUL tests were purchased by SwipeRx users at 60 pharmacies in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City, promoted through the app

As a result, the proportion of pharmacies stocking at least one WHO-EUL test significantly increased in less than three months.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS
Launched during the outbreak of the Omicron variant in Viet Nam, the programme generated substantial improvements in pharmacy availability of WHO-EUL Ag-RDTs at a time when educational activities and door-to-door pharmacy sales were restricted by the pandemic.

Looking forward, FIND and SwipeRx will continue to work together and explore ways to improve pharmacy access to quality assured, self-use Ag-RDTs in Viet Nam and South-East Asia.

For more information, please contact info@finddx.org or hello@swiperxapp.com

www.finddx.org  www.swiperxapp.com