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Assessment of utilisation and satisfaction with primary health care services among the elderly in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria

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Background: The number of people surviving to older ages is increasing worldwide. This demographic transition with attendant increase in health demand is more pronounced in developing countries. Elderly individuals are an integral part of society and are entitled to their fair share of the health and social services that are provided.

Objective: To study the pattern of utilization of primary health care services and satisfaction among elderly people in Ilorin Metropolis.

Methodology: The study was a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional in design. Multistage stratified random sampling technique was used to collect information from 366 elderly. Study subjects from each ward were determined by proportional technique. Data were collected between February to July 2013. Study subjects were interviewed about utilization, satisfaction, accessibility, affordability and thoroughness of care.

Results: More than three-quarter (84.5%) of the elderly visited PHCs within the last one year for consultation. Less than one-quarter (15.8%) were referred to tertiary health institution with symptoms attributed to heart disease and other non-communicable diseases. Among the 366 elderly, 27.4% were admitted for minor ailments and 45.7% utilized diagnostic services. Family ties, accessibility, prevalence of chronic diseases, literacy level and cost of service showed significant association with PHC services utilization at 95% level of confidence ($p > 0.05$). Less than half (38.5%) were satisfied with the services provided. The areas of dissatisfaction were: inadequate of diagnostic & laboratory facilities (23.4%), long waiting time (17.5%), lack of trained personnel on elderly care (15.1%) and expensive medical services (5.5%).

Conclusion: PHC services utilisation by the study sample was affected by family ties, accessibility and the high prevalence of chronic diseases. Satisfaction with PHC services by the elderly was poor. Subjects living alone or crippled by immobility did not significantly utilize health services properly. Community based geriatrics services through home visits can help this vulnerable group.

Biography

Abdul Raheem IS, MBBS, MPH, M.Sc, MPA, FRIPH, FMCPH is a Nigerian medical doctor with postgraduate training in Public Health. He is a fellow of both Royal Institute of Public Health (London) and National Postgraduate Medical College, Faculty of Public Health (Nigeria). He holds Master degrees in Public Health, Epidemiology & Biostatistics and Public Administration. He specializes in Geriatrics & Epidemiology. His areas of interests are Geriatric Epidemiology, Care of the Elderly and Health Administration and has more than fifty publications to his credit in both local, National and International Journals. Dr Abdulraheem has served as a Consultant to WHO, UNICEF, NPI, GAVI & FMOH (Nigeria) on Polio Eradication Programme and National Epidemiological review of Communicable Diseases. Currently, Abdulraheem is an Associate Professor at the Department of Epidemiology & Community Health, College of Medicine, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

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