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Conference Abstract

Unqualified Health Care Providers in Rural Health Care System in Bangladesh: Quality of services and effects on Maternal and Child Health

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Abstract

Objectives: To assess the quality and extent of maternal and child health services provided by Unqualified Health Care Providers (UHCPs) in rural Bangladesh and to explore the possibility of integrating their services in public health care system.

Background: Unqualified Health Care Providers (UNHCPs) are the gateway for seventy seven percent of the population in rural Bangladesh, prescribing allopathic medicine without or limited training and knowledge. Women and children's health care in rural areas mostly depend on them. Information about the quality of services they deliver and its contributions to maternal and child health in rural areas is inadequate. This study is an attempt to reduce those information gaps.

Methods: A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches has been employed. Ninety-eight UHCPs, twenty-two key informants were interviewed. Twenty-two facilities were surveyed; twenty treatment protocols of UHCPs were reviewed. Study was conducted in the sub-district and below. The quantitative data were gathered from interviews and observation checklists and were analyzed using SPSS. The qualitative information was listed as key concepts, themes and images that generated meaningful answers on the key areas of investigation selected for the study.

Results: Half of the UHCPs were found completed 10th grade of schooling and most of them received some sort of medical training. Most common training was village doctor course. Eighty-five percent of the UHCPs provide maternal and child healthcare, majority of them does not have professional medical qualification on these areas. Low-cost, proximity, accessibility and modes of payment were found main factors to use their services. Unnecessary use of antibiotics and antihistamine was detected. For ante-natal and post-natal check-up majority did not follow standard protocol. Wrong prescriptions in serious cases like eclampsia were reported.

Conclusion: Unqualified health care providers are deeply rooted in the rural areas in Bangladesh. Health services that are providing by them cannot be ignored. Immediate elimination is also not possible. By providing appropriate training and under professional supervision their services can be integrated in primary healthcare system. Findings may help Bangladesh in taking policy decisions on how to integrate them in the system.

Keywords

unqualified health care providers; quality; access; maternal and child health

PowerPoint presentation

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