

Patient perspectives on utilizing a mobile medical clinic in rural Philippine communities

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study was to evaluate ABC's for Global Health Mobile Medical Clinic (ABC-MMC) in providing access to primary health care services in addition to prevention and management of hypertension and diabetes in rural villages (barangays) in Pampanga Province, Philippines.

Methods: This was an exploratory qualitative study conducted in November 2021 using open-ended, semi-structured focus group interviews. Participants enrolled in ABC-MMC were recruited from six of the 18 barangays served by ABC-MMC. Community health workers (CHWs) from each barangay were instructed on facilitating focus groups. Focus group interviews were recorded and data was analyzed using open coding methods.

Results: Six focus groups were completed with N=57 adult Filipino participants (28.1% male, 71.9% female). Overall, the participant mean age was 61 years with a majority having hypertension (84.2%) and type 2 diabetes (42.1%). Mean duration for patient-enrollment in ABC-MMC was 2.3 years. Four major focus group themes emerged: (1) barriers for access to healthcare, (2) facilitators for access to healthcare, (3) positive perceptions towards ABC-MMC, and (4) patient health literacy levels.

Conclusion: As far as we know, ABC-MMC is the first mobile primary healthcare program that addresses the lack of healthcare services in low-income rural Philippine barangays that also focuses on chronic disease prevention and management. This study demonstrates that the ABC-MMC was well-received by rural Filipino communities. Barriers and facilitators to engaging in ABC-MMC services were also identified to improve this mobile healthcare program when working toward improved health outcomes in low-income underserved Philippine barangays.