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EXAMINING HEALTHCARE WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES & INSIGHTS CONCERNING AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT IN THREE ETHIOPIAN HOSPITALS: A QUALITATIVE PILOT STUDY

(1) Background, needs assessment, and/or objectives:

Hospitals in the United States have an abundance of unused medical equipment while many developing countries are in considerable need of these resources. Many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have donated medical equipment to health centers in low-resource settings to circumvent this issue; however, studies show many of these donations are not usable by the facilities that receive them. To better serve the partner hospitals of our NGO, Oasis Medical Relief (OMR), we investigated the perspectives and insights of Ethiopian healthcare workers (HCWs) on the medical equipment distribution paradigm of the nation.

(2) Community partner (Full Business Name & Website):

Nifas Silke Lafto Sub-City Woreda 12 Health Center Lafto
Department of Mother-Child Health
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Binyam Mulate, MPH (Department Head)
*Our community partner does not have a website.

(3) Methods, approach, design, and/or statistical analysis:

Qualitative analysis took place after conducting semi-structured, open-ended interviews (n=six) with HCWs (four physicians and two hospital administrators) working in hospitals in Addis Ababa and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Categorical content analysis was utilized to develop themes. Topical areas addressed by questions include: populations served, prevalence of diseases, laws, and strategies guiding medical equipment distribution, funding and budget for medical equipment, etc.

(4) Results, outcomes, and/or lessons learned:

Three themes related to perspectives and insights of HCWs on the current medical equipment distribution paradigm in Ethiopia interviewed include: 1) state of healthcare concerns, 2) medical equipment scarcity, 3) policy shaping medical distribution paradigm.

(5) Conclusions:

Pre-donation assessments utilized to understand equipment needs are a recognized process to more effectively address medical equipment/supply shortages by the World Health Organization. However, to further strengthen such efforts, qualitative interviews with HCWs are a tool that can be utilized to promote greater understanding that enhances a more effective partnership between NGOs and their partner hospitals. Furthermore, increasing decentralized methods of procuring medical equipment should be further explored to mitigate issues with national distribution of medical supplies.

In our own experience interviewing healthcare workers at an urban SNNPR hospital, we found that the HCWs were excellent sources of information on the paucity of medical equipment which affects their patient's outcomes and overall quality of treatment. Interviewing the financial administrator, on the other hand, gave us insight into the amount of funding and medical equipment his hospital historically receives and how that relates to surrounding hospitals. This financial administrator was well-versed in the legislations set by Ethiopian regulatory authorities, and he described to us inconsistencies in the implementation of laws regarding governmental medical equipment distribution. By combining these two viewpoints, we were better able to understand and address patient-centered concerns while acknowledging certain underlying sociopolitical factors.

COMMUNITY PARTNER

SEE ABOVE