

Awareness and Utilization of Primary Health Centre Services among Rural Population: A Review Based on Available Literature

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Abstract

Introduction: Health is the best condition for happiness and progress in the life of an individual as well as a community. Primary Health Centre (PHC) is the most essential constituent of Community Health Care System as it is the first point of connection between civilian and the Community Health System. This paper aims to assess the awareness and utilization of PHC services among rural population.

Method: A comprehensive systematic session of published literature and journal articles from Pub-Med and EBSCOHOST databases was done that are focusing from 2010 to 2017. Search strategy specific to each databases was used.

Result: Out of seven articles, four research studies revealed that the majority of respondents were aware about the presence of PHC services in their area, one research study found that there was lack of awareness about PHC services, five research studies found that there was low utilization of PHC services, one research study revealed that utilization of PHC services is better for preventive and promotive care and one research study finding revealed that the utilization of PHCs service was adequate.

Conclusion: The study concluded that there is an imperative need to raise awareness amongst the rural population regarding health services provided by PHC through IEC activities to enhance the service utilization by the community through their participation.

Keywords: Awareness, Utilization, Primary Health Centre (PHC), Services and Rural Population.

Introduction

Primary Health Care is defined as “Essential health care made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them, through their full participation, and at a cost that community and country can afford” has been suggested as a set of health services that can conformed the

challenges of a dynamic world. Primary Health Care is the first level of connection between the individuals, the family and the community with the community health system, which brings health care as close as accessible to the common people where they live and work. In the modern time, the base for organization of health services in India through Primary Health Care was established by the suggestions of the Bhore committee in 1946. Later, based on the recommendations of first integrated all round development programme (the community development programme) PHC were established for each community development block. In India, the PHCs play the key role in delivering health care to rural people. The PHCs are assumed to provide preventive, promotive and curative health care to the public.⁽¹⁻²⁾ Equity, along with inter-sectoral co-ordination, community participation and appropriate technology has been described as the

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principles and pillars of Primary Health Care.⁽³⁾ The utilization of services by the community alters from place to place at PHCs and transforms over the time based on the accessibility of quality of services. It is also needed to assess the utilization trend of PHC services by the public.⁽⁴⁾

In most developing countries such as India, where the utilization of primary health services has remained low however there has been growing public and private investment on the provision of sophisticated health care.

The awareness of the community about health programs and their involvement in organizing for health services, influence their level of participation and utilization of linked health facilities. Majority of people living in most developing countries of the world, including Africa, have a poor perceptiveness of their national health systems and programs and thus do not lay the health facilities into appropriate and maximum use.⁽⁶⁾

Data has shown that abundant number of women in rural areas of Bangladesh meet serious problems all the while pregnancy and childbirth. Frequently, the women do not recognize about health care services existent for their usage, although under-utilization of healthcare services can result in maternal morbidity and mortality.

Universally, research indicates that approach to and utilization of Primary Health Care Services can be different in countries between urban and rural (and nomadic) community, with concluding having the poorest approach to and utilization of PHC services.

Hence, it was found necessary to design a narrative review to find the available literature for identifying the awareness and utilization of PHC services among rural people.

Aim: The aim of this review is to identify the awareness and utilization of PHC services among rural population.

Objectives: To determine the awareness and utilization of PHC services among rural population.

Methodology

Search Strategy: An electronic search of articles published in various journals till 2017 (September) was conducted. Search was restricted to only English language. The database search done was Pub-Med and EBSCOHOST. Articles containing following key search terms were retrieved.

“Awareness” [MeSH Terms] OR awareness [Text Word] AND “utilization” [Subheading] OR utilization [Text Word] AND primary [All Fields] AND “health” [MeSH Terms] OR HEALTH [Text Word] AND centre [All Fields] AND services [All Fields] AND “rural population” [MeSH Terms] OR rural population [Text Word]

Types of Study: Community based cross-sectional, comparative, survey and descriptive study.

Types of Participant: Rural people including women aged 15 to 49 years, patients, families, household and adults.

Settings: Villages, rural community and semi-urban community.

Outcome: Awareness and utilization of PHC services among rural population.

Result

The systematic search was conducted by framing the terms individually and in combination with all synonyms, also according to the database. In addition to this, a manual Pub-Med search was undertaken using the keywords and search synonyms from already found articles. Additions of seven articles were found. Initial search retrieved 48641 articles over which 23598 articles were selected manually. Duplicates were removed and reviewed 398 articles for eligibility, 23200 articles were excluded because of duplications in two databases, 353 studies were excluded due to unavailability of full text. Hence seven articles were screened which includes quantitative study.

Detail description of study: Rajpurohit AC., Srivastava AK. et al. conducted a Cross sectional study in the year of in the year of 2013 on utilization of primary health centre services amongst rural population of northern India- some socio-demographic correlates. 585 household were selected by Stratified random sampling. Data was obtained by using predesigned and pre-tested interview schedule. Findings revealed that majority (76.2%) of the subjects was aware about the PHC services in their area and found to be low (36.3%) utilization of its services.

N. Thimmaiah and C.V. Anitha conducted a Comparative study in the year of 2013 on utilization of primary health centre services in rural and urban areas: a comparative study in Mysore Taluk. 240 household

were selected by Simple random sampling technique. Data was obtained by using self administered structured questionnaire. The study found that the utilization of PHC services was too low both in rural and urban areas, 21.7% and 20% respectively.

Rushender Rajan, Balaji Ramraj et.al conducted a Descriptive study in the year of 2016 on effective utilization of health care services provided by Primary Health Centre and Sub- Centre in rural Tamil Nadu, India. 3220 household were selected by Simple random sampling technique. Data was obtained by using structured interview schedule. The finding revealed that majority of respondents were aware of Primary Health Centre health care services and the utilization of primary level services (PHC and Sub-centres) is better for preventive and promotive care but is poor for treatment of acute illness, intra-natal care and family welfare services, special investigation services.

K N Prasad, V Suchi et al. conducted a Cross-sectional study in the year of 2015 on utilization of health facilities at Primary Health Centre by rural community of Pondicherry. 300 families were selected by simple random sampling technique. Data was obtained by interview using questionnaire. The finding suggests that majority of subjects were utilizing PHCs services.

B.E. Egbewale, O.O. Odu conducted a Cross-sectional study in the year of 2013 on perception and utilization of primary health care services in a semi-urban community in South-Western Nigeria. 395 adults were selected by multistage sampling technique. Data was obtained by interview conducted using semi-structured pre-tested questionnaire. The result shows that majority (71.1%) of participants were aware about the presence of a PHC facility within their health districts and (44.1%) participants had ever-utilized PHC facility within their health districts.

Yaya Sanni, Shah Vaibhav et.al conducted a Cross-sectional study in the year of 2017 on awareness and utilization of community clinic services among women in rural areas in Bangladesh. 11,673 women aged 15 to 49 years were selected by Systematic sampling. Data was obtained by using questionnaire. The study finding revealed that lack of awareness and low utilization of community clinics among women of reproductive age group.

Alfaqeh Ghadah, Cook Erica J conducted a Comparative study in the year of 2016 on access and

utilisation of primary health care services comparing urban and rural areas of Riyadh Providence Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 880 patients aged 18 years or older were selected by classification of the population density of the governorates. Data was obtained by using questionnaire survey. This study highlights that there are high levels of satisfaction among patients of all primary health care services. The utilization of primary health care services is quite low in rural population.

Summary and Findings: The available literature refined to get seven quantitative study. Out of seven articles, four research studies revealed that the majority of respondents were aware about the presence of Primary Health Centre services in their area, one research study finding is showing lack of awareness about Primary Health Centre services, five research studies found that there was low utilization of Primary Health Centre services, one research study finding is showing that the utilization of PHC services is better for preventive and promotive care but is poor for treatment of acute illness, intra-natal care and family welfare services, special investigations services and one research study finding revealed that the utilization of PHCs service was adequate.

Importance in Community: Primary health care (PHC) is the frontline of the health care system. Primary Health Care plays an important part of keeping community healthy. Each of Primary Health Care centres has a multidisciplinary health care team that renders extent of services in a one place. This interconnected access to health care delivery assures that clients obtain the appropriate care by the appropriate provider, when and where they require it.

A strong, approachable PHC structure decreases burden on hospitals by aiding people to deal their health problems in the community. A society is constituted by various strata including people of below, average and high income groups. Their needs differ and not each person is in a situation to manage the desirable health care services. Primary Health Care is a comprehensive health care system where in each person of a country can approach medical facilities regardless of his/her economic status and race.

Future Significance: The review helps to understand the perception and usage of PHC services among rural population. With more than 70% population of India living in rural areas where the condition of

medical facilities is deplorable. The major confront in the health care sector are lack of quality of care, poor responsibility, lack of awareness and confined approach to facilities. Hence, it is necessary to create awareness among rural people, as the mortality rates are high due to diseases. So, rural people will utilize the primary health centre services.

Limitation:

- Database search was limited
- Search strategy was refined to awareness and utilization of Primary health centre among rural population only.
- Seven articles were included only.
- Was limited to only in rural populations.

Conclusion

- Cooperative endeavour healthcare providers and local leaders is required to raise awareness and enhanced approach of healthcare services through PHC services. Stakeholders in health should provide adequate system to endorse awareness and utilization of health facilities in rural areas.
- In accession, orientation programs admire the advantages of the PHCs facilities to correct false beliefs about PHC between local communities and formation of positive approach passages that connect primary health centres to the communities should be the priority of the administrator of PHC to improve the utilization of services.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Source of Funding: Self

Ethical Clearance: Ethical permission was taken.

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