

An analysis of gender differences in health seeking behavior of Malaria patients: a case study of Siaya District Hospital

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Abstract:

This study set out to identify the factors behind gender differences in health seeking behavior with a focus on malaria patients. More specifically, the study set out to examine whether gender influences the type of treatment sought, delay in seeking treatment and whether malaria patients perceive a difference in service provision for men and women by health providers. The study was based in Siaya District which has been ranked as one of the poorest districts in Kenya with high morbidity and mortality rates due to infectious diseases, the most common being malaria, HIV/AIDs and respiratory diseases. The research findings were based on information collected from Siaya District Hospital ward patients. The researcher employed the use of non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used to choose the hospital, respondents suffering from Malaria as well as the health providers to be interviewed. Specific information on illness was gathered directly from the patients. From the data analysis, it emerged that cost not gender determines Health Seeking Behaviour. Patients continued to be faced with many challenges, the major one being the purchase of medical supplies. In as much as the hospital charges are low, patients have to buy all medical supplies including syringes, medicine and gloves. Health education needs to be undertaken for the area residents so as to enhance the health care, use of preventive measures and correct medicine usage. This is especially important because the first course of action on presentation of symptoms is self medication. Health education will also enhance an individual's capacity to asses' services on offer as well as empower them to judge a Health care providers competence.