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The Experiences of Healthcare Providers Dealing With Emergencies at a Primary Healthcare Level

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Purpose:

Emergency care at a primary health care (PHC) level is situated within a broader system of care, the availability of resources, consultative support and the effectiveness of the referral system for emergencies is not known. The objectives of the study are: to analyse the system of emergency care using Walt and Gilson's policy analysis framework, to identify strengths and weaknesses within the system of emergency care at PHC level and to develop guidelines for remodelling of the system of emergency care at a PHC level. This presentation focuses on the experiences of health care providers dealing with emergencies at a PHC level.

Methods:

In this phase of the study data were collected using semi structured interviews and analysed using qualitative content analysis to describe experiences of health care practitioners dealing with emergencies at PHC level. Participants included health care practitioners from various levels of the primary health care system in the Gauteng province, South Africa. Sixteen participants were recruited using purposive sampling based on a sampling framework to include the various levels of facilities, which comprise the Primary or District Health System.

Results:

On analysis, various themes emerged from the data. Participants' experiences within each of these themes varied according to the resources and support region. These themes, however, are contributing factors to the perceived support received by health care practitioners dealing with emergencies at PHC level. A common expressed need was for continuous training in emergency management. Team involvement was an important emerging theme and collaboration between practitioners was considered vital for optimal emergency management. Weaknesses within the referral system and associated processes were cited as a major concern.

Conclusion:

Support for health care practitioners varied between regions, however, the factors contributing to the perceived support and experiences of health care practitioners were common across all practitioners. There is a need for continuous training in emergency care for practitioners working in PHC. There is also a great need for strengthening of collaborative efforts between multidisciplinary team members. The articulation between

various systems within the PHC system has been highlighted as a weakness for ensuring effective, efficient emergency care at this level.

Title:

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Keywords:

Emergency Care, Health care Providers experiences and Primary Health Care

Abstract Summary:

Integration of effective emergency services into primary health care directly reduces mortality and disability. Globally, emergency services in this setting is neglected. Support for the offering of these services is questionable. This study aims to describe the experiences of health care providers dealing with emergencies at this level.

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Author Summary: Meghan Botes is a specialist nurse in the field of emergency nursing and am currently lecturing in the undergraduate programme at the University of the Witwatersrand since 2012. She completed her Masters degree in 2014 and a post graduate diploma in nursing education in 2015. She is currently pursuing her PhD focusing on strengthening emergency care at a primary health care level.

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Author Summary: Professor Judith Bruce is a nursing academic, a researcher and an assistant dean with 35 years' experience in the education of nurses. Her specific interest is in problem-based learning and assessment of learning and curricular issues in nursing education. To date, she has supervised 36 masters students and 6 PhD students

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