

Assessment of Health Services in Kogi State Public and Private Secondary Schools

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Abstract This study was conducted to assess the status and scope of health services delivery in Kogi State Public and private secondary schools. Twenty four (12public and 12private) secondary schools were selected across the three senatorial districts of Kogi State i.e Kogi Central, Kogi East and Kogi West. Data were collected from a conveniences sample of 1440 staffs and students of private and public schools (960 students and 480 staff) using school health services questionnaire (SHSQ) consisting of socio-demographic section followed by well validated instruments. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, t-test analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings of this study showed an unsatisfactory implementation of school health services in both public and private secondary schools across Kogi state. Among other recommendations, this paper infers that school administrators, policy makers, health professionals should implement a workable school health policy and strategies in promotion of health services in Kogi state.

Keywords Health, Services, Assessment, Private, Public, Secondary schools

1. Introduction

There is no doubt in the fact that health constitutes a priority in the life of every individual because it determines to a great extent, the level at which man functions in the society. Hence health is that quality of life that enables an individual live most and serve his community best. It remains a fact that health is a major determinant of success in man's life. It guarantees hope and progress for individuals in any society (Dorman, 2002).

In the Nigerian society, just like any other place in the world, the youths and school age children constitute a significant portion of the country's population. The role and contributions of these youths to national growth and development cannot be overemphasized. The youths serve as the bedrock for economic, political, technological, agricultural and educational developments in the nation. The focal point in the development of every human society are its youths. The healthier the youths, the more accurate they can think and act, and the more productive they become. This is the more reason why quality attention should be focussed on the health of the Nigerian secondary school students who constitute an important segment of the Nigerian society. Educational institutions such as the secondary schools are in a unique and powerful position to improve the health status of youths who attend such schools. Schools provide a setting

which can mould the health behaviours Of children and youths positively. The teachers and schools generally are academically prepared to organize developmental appropriate learning experiences that can empower students to embrace safer and healthier lifestyles (McTighe, 2000).

To protect, preserve, maintain and promote the health of children, it is absolutely necessary to provide them with comprehensive health care services. This paper acknowledge the fact that, in Nigerian secondary schools, students go to school with varied health problems since they come from different backgrounds with different health status and needs. Many of the students have health challenges which may be unnoticed by their parents. These health problems can constitute obstacles to learning and academic progress except if they are detected and corrected early enough. The only measure which the school can adopt to detect such hidden health challenges in school children is through an effective and well implemented school health services.

The value of Health services in Schools

Health care services utilization is very crucial and of great importance to the people in the country. These is seen as the tremendous contribution of Nigerian government have towards the provision of qualitative health care services, infrastructure to its population. However, concerns about the need for school health services as educational learning institutions have been grossly left out over the years. As public secondary schools in the country have not been provided with funding for procurement of health infrastructures, equipment's, and personnel, as compared to private secondary school which provision is made by the owners of the schools in meeting the current health systems

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and promotion of healthy living among students attending private secondary schools. It has been observed that public secondary schools budgetary allocations have been misappropriated by public official holders at the detriment of the schools making the secondary schools to lack basic health care services. Private secondary schools tuition fees is not affordable for a common man which has made it only for the rich to afford and obtain qualitative health care services in schools. In order to meet the value of health services in school, public secondary schools in Kogi State must be provided with qualitative health care services in order to meet the vision 2020 goals on health for the general public. In view of the above, a comprehensive and well planned school health services is of paramount importance in the life of every school child but such programme can only be successful if it is adequately funded and has the required manpower to implement it.

Importance of School Health services in Secondary Schools

Many professionals in the fields of health and education have confirmed that there is a strong inter connective factor between health status of the learner and his academic achievement i.e for any meaningful learning to occur, the learner needs to be in a state of good health (Berryman 1994, Bullard, 1995, Telljohann, Symmons & Pateman, 2004).

The school health service is made up of important components such as health appraisal, health examination, referral services, health counselling, emergency care for sicknesses and injuries, correction of remediable defects, ambulatory services, health screening, prevention and control of communicable diseases, teachers observation etc.. For these services to be effective, the school health services needs to be given adequate attention by education policy makers, school administrators and the public in general. In Nigeria unfortunately, school health programmes form part of the school curriculum but seems not to have been acknowledged or accorded the attention and treatment it deserves, particularly, the school health services (Nwimo, 2006).

In the Nigerian situation, one will not be wrong to say that the school health programme is only included in the total school curriculum just to fulfil all righteousness. The researcher's observation has revealed that health services are either partially rendered or are not rendered at all in many secondary schools. This observation was what called for this study, in order to ascertain the existing situation as regards school health services in Kogi State Secondary schools as perceived by staff and students in some selected private and public secondary schools across Kogi State of Nigeria.

A sizeable proportion of the Nigeria's population is in the school system and a good portion of the nation's revenue is being invested in their education. At this period when Nigeria is increasing its investment in the education sector, it is right that steps should be taken to safeguard the health of the secondary school age group in our society in order to maximize the returns of the nation's investment in education

(Amos, 2001).

Review of Related Literature

School health services has being defined by authorities in a variety of ways. Will goose (1977), reports that school health services comprise of many procedures used to determine the health status of students, to enlist his cooperation in health protection and maintenance and to work with parents to correct defects and prevent illness.

School health service has been defined by the joint committee on health problems in education of the American Medical Association (1970) as that part of the school health programme provided by physicians, nurses, dentist, health educators, other allied health personnel, social workers, teachers and others, to appraise, protect and promote the health of students and the school personnel.

Health care according to Okafor (1982), includes all services rendered to help someone with problems to return to or maintain normal health. Fouquet and Gage (1994) pointed out that these services include safety measures, proper nutrition, exercises, rest, sleep and medical care.

The need for health care services in secondary schools cannot be overemphasized due to the complex nature of the various physiological and sociological health problems common among adolescents of secondary school age. At this stage, health care services play an important role in addressing these health problems. As noted by Newell (1982), when individuals are struck by sickness, effective use of health care services play a large role in their recovery.

Cang (1978), conducted a study on the health service needs of children in twenty three (23) day care centres in California. He found that, the children needed dental health services and screening tests to identify those who needed immunization and medical treatment. They reported that 71% of the day care enrolled a total of 200 children and above including handicapped children and only 19.2% of the centres had provision for mildly ill children, they noted that there was need for proper management of emergency cases and good nutritional services.

In another study, Fajewonyomi and Afolabi (1993), studied the status and health needs of nursery school children in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, using 13 nursery schools. They observed that 12% of the schools did not have any form of health care facility while 92.3% had no written health guidelines and there was no any backup resources to which children could be referred for treatment. 77% of the schools were in the practice of sending sick children home. They found out that the most common medical condition among nursery school children include cough, diarrhea, fever, malaria, stomach pain and vomiting. Again, they found out that 61.5% of schools reported high incidence of absenteeism due to ill-health. They concluded that availability of health and knowledge about health needs of children in nursery schools investigated were generally poor.

In the research conducted by Nwimo (2006) on the status of preventive health services in Owerri educational zone of Imo state, Nigeria. The results revealed that preventive

health services were provided for students in varying degrees. For example, the findings showed that those students who have communicable diseases are sent to physicians for medical attention. This finding was encouraging and gratifying. The results also revealed that very few teachers reported students being isolated, sent to school clinics or excluded from school as measures adopted in cases of communicable diseases. These results suggested that little attention was given by teachers to ensure that students with communicable diseases did not come into contact with healthy students until they are certified fit to join their colleagues. Nwimo (2006) reported that her research findings showed that many secondary schools in Owerri, Imo state of Nigeria, had poor ventilation and lighting, poor sanitation and lack of health conveniences such as toilet facilities, overcrowded classrooms, poor water supply or intermittent or inadequate supply, poor quality housing and poor health habits.

2. Materials and Methods

Study Area

This study was carried out in Kogi State in the North - Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The state is located between latitude 7°48'N and longitude 6°43'E sharing boundaries with Ondo, Kwara, Ekiti, Niger, Benue, Nasarawa, Anambra, Enugu State, Edo, as well as Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), the capital of the country. The state has a population of 3,278,487 people (National Population Census, 2006). The study was a cross-sectional survey using self-completion questionnaire. It was carried out in 3 senatorial districts: Kogi Central, West and East of Kogi State.

S/no	District	Private	Public	Total
1	Kogi Central	4	4	8
2.	Kogi West	4	4	8
3.	Kogi East	4	4	8
	Total	12	12	24

In Kogi Senatorial districts, 4 public and 4 private secondary schools were randomly selected from each zone forming a total of 24 secondary schools. In 24 sampled secondary schools, 60 respondents (40 students on the selection criteria of ages 14-19 years and 20 staff members on the selection of 25-50 years) were included in the study using stratified sampling technique. However, all the 60 respondents questionnaire collected from the study were used for analysis.

3. Method of Analysis

The analytical procedure for the study involved the use of descriptive statistics; such as means and standard deviations to describe the level of opinions of staffs and students of public and private secondary schools in regards to availability, provision, personnel, facilities, equipment's, organization/administration, utilization and funding of health services in the study area.

4. Results

The result of this study in finding difference between staff and students in their perceptions of provision, personnel, facilities / Equipment's, organization / administration, utilization and funding of Health services in Kogi State, Nigeria Private and Public Secondary Schools using a two-tailed test as shown in the table below:

Two-tailed t-test on the difference between staff and students in their perceptions of provision, personnel, facilities/ Equipment's, organization/administration, utilization and funding of Health services in Kogi State, Nigeria Private and Public Secondary Schools

Variables	School	n	x	std	t	n	x	std	t
Provision of Health Services	Public	753	2931	.758	2.794	380	27.3	.891	1.07
	Private	189	2.766	.717		78	2.821	.386	
Personnel	Public	753	3.090	.590	7.390	380	2.745	.813	3.831
	Private	189	2.692	.679		78	3.103	.305	
Facilities/Equipment	Public	753	2.990	.730	1.841	380	2.945	.860	.467
	Private	189	3.105	.789		78	2.87	.549	
Organization/Administration	Public	752	2.820	.676	1.3335	380	2.711	.884	752
	Private	189	2.745	.695		78	2.615	.489	
Utilization	Public	752	3.080	.891	4.744	380	2.997	1.103	1.935
	Private	189	2.770	.790		78	2.731	1.136	
Funding	Public	753	2.500	8.30	6.113	380	2.276	.748	1.979
	Private	189	2.160	.645		78	2.089	.809	

t (456-940) = 1.95 < 0.05 (Not Significant)

The results of table above shows insignificant difference between the opinions of staff members and students of public and private secondary schools in Kogi State with respect to their perceptions about the various aspects of health services-provision, facilities, equipment's, organization/administration, utilization and funding of school health services.

The computed mean score for both students and staff members in public and private secondary schools reveals an insignificant difference. This suggests that staff and students of Kogi State public and private secondary schools had similar perceptions about all aspects of school health services. This further suggests that the status of health services in the two categories of schools are not different as perceived by the staff and students. Considering the results of the table above, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

5. Discussion of Findings

This study was conducted to assess the status of health services in Kogi state public and private secondary schools. The areas of concern in this study includes, provisions, availability of facilities/equipment's, organization/administration, utilization and funding of school health services. The findings of this study in the table above indicated that there is no satisfactory provision of health services in Kogi State Secondary Schools. This condition could be attributed to limitations in funding, personnel, facilities, equipment's and poor organization/administration. This findings implies that the secondary schools have not met the expectations of what an ideal school health services should entail. On the other hand, the findings show that, the variables that determine an effective school health services programme are inadequate in both categories of schools. This further reveals that education stakeholders, school administrations and the community in general are failing to recognize the importance and vital role that health services play in protecting and promoting the health of the young ones who are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow.

Considering the mean difference with regards to provision of health services between the opinions of students in public and private secondary schools, the insignificant difference is in favour of the private secondary schools. This implies that little effort are being made towards provision of health services in private secondary schools when compared with public secondary schools. The difference in the opinion of staff in the private and public secondary schools on provision of health services also showed insignificant difference. Like in the case of the student's opinion, the means and standard deviations goes in favour of the private schools, suggesting that the situation in private schools is a little better. Concerning availability of personnel and facilities/equipment's, the two categories of students do not differ much in their perceptions. This implies that both private and public schools are inadequate in personnel and facilities/

equipment's to run the school health services programme.

With regards to funding, the results revealed that the opinion of staff and students in the two category of schools are insignificantly different. This goes to show that both the public and private secondary schools in Kogi State are inadequately funded. Considering all the means and standard deviations in the findings, the difference in most cases went in favour of the private secondary schools, which implies that little effort being put towards provision and funding of health services in the private schools when compared to public schools. From these findings; it could be inferred that the status of health services in the private schools a little better than that of public schools. The researcher is of the opinion that certain perceived factors could account for the little improvement of health services in the private schools. Prominent among these factors include provision of scanty health services to meet the required standard to enable the private schools gain the licence to operate from the state ministry of education, to win the interest of the public for good patronage since the private schools are money venture organizations, hence, most students who attend high standard private schools in Nigeria are from homes with high socio-economic status.

In comparism with the public secondary schools, the situation is extremely below expectation. The findings of this study reveals that most public secondary schools in Kogi State, are seriously found wanting in respect to provision, facilities, equipment's, organization, and administration and funding of school health services. These findings are in support of the earlier position of Udoh, Fawole, Ajala, Okafor and Nwana (1987). These authors reported from their study that facilities for health services are so limited in most Nigerian public schools. They also reported that the availability of health manpower for the implementation are also limited. These authors further stated that, the most unfortunate situation in Nigeria is that, there is no evidence of plans for provision of health services in schools.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, which emanated from the analysis of data collected, the following conclusions are made:

- Health services in Kogi State Secondary Schools are faced with numerous challenges which includes poor funding, lack of required manpower, poor organization and administration and inadequate provision of the needed facilities/equipment's'
- Secondary schools in Kogi State do not provide comprehensive health services to cater for varying health needs of their students and staff.
- Private secondary schools are a bit better than public secondary schools in terms of provision, personnel, funding and organization/administration of health services.

7. Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made

- To improve the status of health services in Kogi State Secondary Schools, there should be policy statements by the Kogi State government with clarifications of how the school health services should be implemented along with the aims, objectives, the scope and mode of implementation clearly -Kogi state government should ensure proper implementation of the policy statements through adequate funding and provision of the needed manpower and material resources.
- Inspections Of secondary schools should not only focus on the instructional facilities but the organization, administration, facilities and equipment's for health services should also constitute areas of attention by schools inspectors.
- The inspection of schools should be done on regular basis to ensure strict adherence to the implementation of school health policy statements.
- For private secondary schools to be given licence to operate in the state, meeting the standards for health services, adequate manpower and material resources should constitute a major requirement.

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