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Accessing health care services by students at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou, South Africa

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South African youth experience obstacles related to accessing age-specific health care services. School-based health centers provide youth-friendly services tailored to meeting the healthcare needs of young people. Are there obstacles preventing students from accessing healthcare services? The study aims to assess the level of awareness regarding the University of Venda (UNIVEN) campus health services and to determine the availability and acceptability barriers experienced by students in accessing the campus health services. Five hundred and thirty-four respondents drawn from all the residences in the University campus and comprising students from all the schools and levels were sampled using two stage sampling. Questionnaires were administered face-to-face to respondents. The validity and reliability of the study was ensured. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, right to privacy, and no-harm to participants, were observed and addressed. The results from data analysis indicated that the average age of the study population was 21.85 years with almost all the respondents (95%) being aware of the existence of a health clinic in the University campus. However, only 63% had gone for consultation at the clinic. Awareness of the clinic's services appears to be poor. HIV counselling and testing was the most known service, while minor illnesses' management was the most utilised service (48%). Barriers experienced by the respondents were related to waiting times and opening hours of the clinic, with only 33% and 39% respectively, describing them as ideal. The study provides evidence that although University health services may be provided at no cost, students still experience barriers in accessing them. Effective measures are needed to increase students' awareness of the clinic's services and to shorten waiting times and improve clinic opening hours.

Biography

Kwabena A Kyei is statistician & demographer, having a bachelor's degree in Mathematics (with Statistics) from the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, a master's degree from Universite Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium and a doctoral degree in Demography from the University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa. I have been a lecturer in statistics and demography at the university for over twenty-five years. I am currently the Head (Chair) of the Department of Statistics at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou. I have published over thirty-seven articles in accredited journals, covering topics on unemployment, childhood mortality, breastfeeding, profitability in banking, etc. and spanning through areas in economics, demography and primary health care. I also did post-doctoral studies in actuarial science & biostatistics

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