

Title: Referral pattern for maternity patients in the Nkhensani District Hospital in Giyani sub-district

Student: Mr. Agrey Ernest Mboweni

Student number: 0719146X

ABSTRACT

Background

Nkhensani Hospital is a level 1 district hospital which provides comprehensive and integrated health care for the Giyani sub-district population, which is estimated to be 270 000. The major services provided are casualty, medicine, paediatrics, maternity and surgery. The hospital is experiencing challenges in the maternity ward which is admitting more patients than the 47 allocated beds. Monthly, an average of 400 women are admitted for delivery from clinics. The causes are suspected to be due to a number of different factors like shortage of staff at the clinics, poor referral system, poor services at clinics and health centres, poor facilities, and pregnant woman not attending antenatal care and bypassing lower levels of care.

Aim

To describe the pattern and appropriateness of referrals in patients attending the maternity ward at the Nkhensani Hospital.

Methodology

A retrospective study was used to review and assess the patient records for the study (January to December 2009). Information was obtained from the Hospital Information System and secondary data from patients records will be used to assess the referral pattern in Nkhensani Hospital's maternity ward.

Results

The data showed that the patients admitted had a mean age of 26 years, with a range from 15 to 45 years. Patients were admitted for various reasons, which when categorised were found to have 57% of inappropriate referrals. Similarly 68% of referrals were found to have low risk pregnancies. About 85% of the deliveries were normal vaginal deliveries. Of the patients who attended the facility, 57% were referred from clinics, 19% from community health centres, 1% from general practitioners and 23% as self referrals. The source of referral was not found to be associated with appropriate reasons for delivery, risk category, length of stay or mode of delivery.

Conclusion

The research showed that the referral pattern in the maternity ward from clinics and health centres as well as self referrals indicated that policies were not being adhered to,

which led to an over utilisation of the maternity ward in Nkhensani Hospital under Giyani sub-district.