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Preparedness of Regional Referral Hospitals for the Proposed National Health Insurance Scheme in Uganda: A Study of Four Regional Referral Hospitals.

The Ugandan government plans to go ahead with mandatory health insurance for all Ugandans by 2025. This research investigated the preparedness of Regional Referral Hospitals (RRHs) for the proposed National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in Uganda. The specific objectives that guided the study were: to assess the availability of human resources for health currently in these RRHs, to assess the availability of hospital infrastructure currently in these RRHs, to determine whether the RRHs in Uganda can currently fulfil NHIS accreditation standards, and to get the views of regional referral hospital managers about the proposed NHIS in Uganda. The study mainly took a qualitative research paradigm due to the data collection methods and tools that were used. However, quantitative data processing and analysis procedures were mainly used. The study was cross sectional, the population constituted of the Regional Referral Hospitals in Uganda, but a quota sample of four hospitals conveniently selected from each geographical region, was studied. Four hospital managers purposively selected were interviewed to get their views about the proposed NHIS. Document review, observation with inventory taking and key informant interviews were the data collection methods, while checklists and an interview guide were the tools used in research. The study revealed that the human resources for health and hospital infrastructure were sufficiently available and hence prepared for the proposed NHIS by 76% and 92%, respectively. However, the findings showed that the RRHs are currently not eligible for accreditation by NHIS to provide healthcare because of lack of adequate service requirements (59%); and the views of the RRH managers showed unpreparedness for the scheme. This study concluded that the RRHs are prepared for NHIS though the preparation is not solid. The study hence suggests that the hospital services should be expanded and improved to meet NHIS accreditation standards.

Key Words: Regional Referral Hospitals , Proposed, National Health Insurance Scheme