

DETERMINANTS OF ADHERENCE TO STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AMONG LABORATORY PERSONNEL IN BOMET COUNTY, KENYA

ABSTRACT

Laboratory errors are a major burden in health care systems. To decrease laboratory error and increase laboratory quality international health organizations such as World Health Organization developed laboratory quality management systems (QMS). One of the QMS essential (Document and records) contains Standard operating procedures (SOPs). SOPs are step-by-step instructions the laboratory personnel uses as a guide in performing laboratory procedures. Thus, adhering to SOPs ensures consistency, accuracy, and quality of laboratory procedures thereby increasing the quality of laboratory data and reducing errors. However, studies in Kenya have shown low levels of percentage up on evaluating documents and records which means low adherence to SOPs. This study aims to identify the determinants of adherence to SOPs. A qualitative phenomenological study was conducted in two conveniently selected hospitals (Tenwek mission hospital and Longisa level four hospital) in Bomet County, Kenya. Two focused group discussion and four key informant interview was done. Based on the objectives, collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis and manual coding. The study found that determinants that affect adherence to SOPs are workload, inadequate number of staff, and work pressure from clinicians and patients. Factors that promote adherence to SOPs are appropriately written and available SOPs, educational training on SOPs, a conducive work environment, and the reward of laboratory personnel. Some identified key areas that needed intervention are problems arising with laboratory machine providing companies, non-compliance while performing laboratory tests, and misuse of emergency laboratory requests by clinicians. Further ideas to sustain interventions are competency tests of laboratory personnel and follow-up. This study reveals that determinants that affect adherence to SOPs are not limited to laboratory personnel but are a combination of leadership, environmental, educational, and technological quality improvements. Recommendations of this study include the collaboration of hospital administration staff, clinicians, and patients in laboratory quality improvement.

Key words

Standard operating procedures, laboratory personnel,

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