



Future Health Systems



DFID Department for International Development

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Research Areas

The research areas were identified during a meeting held with stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, Donors, Non Governmental Organizations, Districts, and Consumer groups among others at Hotel Equatoria in March 2006.

 **Future Health Systems**
Innovations for equity

The Research Programme Consortium

This five year Study by the Makerere University School of Public Health aims to improve the ability of the Ugandan health system to provide services that meet the needs of the poor. The Uganda study is just one of similar studies also being conducted in Nigeria, India, China, Afghanistan and Bangladesh as part of the Future Health Systems (FHS) Research Programme Consortium. The consortium is being funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), while the Institute for Development Studies in the UK and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the US are providing technical assistance to the five countries that are conducting the study.



Medical workers at the Mbale Regional Referral Hospital check out newly acquired equipment. For many poor people, such equipment remains out of reach.

The Future Health Systems study intends to cover three main questions.

1. How can the poor be protected against the impoverishing impact of health related shocks and have access to essential health services?
2. Which innovations can make the private and public health sectors work for the poor?
3. How can health policy processes and research to policy linkages be better directed towards meeting the needs of the poor?

Stakeholders in the Study

During the inception phase of the study which commenced in September 2005; the following key activities were carried out;

- Health policy document review
- Stakeholder analysis
- Policy risk analysis
- Identification of possible research areas

Quotes

“Policies and practices are more likely to benefit society when they are informed by research knowledge.

By clearly communicating research to a wide audience - whether this is development practitioners, policymakers, civil society representatives or the general public - it can inform public debate and scrutiny.

Ultimately this leads to more relevant and sustainable development efforts.

The mainstream media can play an important role in communicating research to a range of audiences in ways that make it easy for people to understand how the research relates to them, their community and society at large,” Panos Relay Programme.

Making Health Systems Work for the Poor

The FHS consortium intends to work with government officials and key stakeholders to initiate and assess innovations that make health systems more effective and pro-poor.

Hence at this meeting ideas were shared between the research team and the stakeholders and research areas that were expected to be relevant to the health system in Uganda, while at the same time reflected the three main themes of the FHS RPC (Social protection, promoting public private partnerships and promoting the translation of research into policy) were selected.

To get services at several health centres, the poor have to line up for long.

The 3 main research areas that were suggested included cost and quality of services in the private not for profit and public facilities, social and community health insurance and mitigation of health catastrophes.



Changes in access to Health services.

Every year, the consortium holds a co-ordinators meeting among the partners. The first meeting was held in Jaipur, India in March 2006.

This meeting was attended by RPC members from all the collaborating institutions. Uganda was represented by Dr George Pariyo and Dr Elizabeth

Ekirapa- Kiracho.

At this meeting the researchers shared ideas from the different countries and agreed on areas of focus for the country studies.

A study focusing on the access, cost, volume and quality of services delivered by private and public health facilities was considered most immediately relevant to health policy in Uganda.

In the first year of the study (March 2006- March 2007) the key activities included a capacity building visit to the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom and formative research.



Coordinators of the Future Health Systems Consortium pose for a picture after attending a meeting in the Jaipur, India.

Quotes

Dr David Serwadda, dean of MUSPH in a press interview on the Rakai Male Circumcision study on controlling HIV infection in men said.

“Before the research findings were released, the agency that funded this study, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in U.S. convened a meeting in November 2006 in the Ministry of Health, in which the researcher, funder and the Ministry of Health officials met to discuss how the results will be released and what communication strategy to adopt.

The results were officially released in a month later.

We had several meetings with the Ministry of Health officials so that they would know more about the results and their impact on health.

We held a dissemination workshop with key stakeholders at the Kabira Country Club in January 2007 and this was followed up with a media briefing in February 2007 in Rakai, the study centre. We used several outlets for communicating the results.”

Capacity Building



Communications Officers attached to the Future Health Systems consortium member institutions in a group photo with some staffers at the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex, UK after a skills training in April 2008.

In July 2006 Dr Elizabeth Ekirapa Kiracho a young researcher from the School of public Health visited the University of Sussex to work with Dr Gerry Bloom, Dr Henry Lucas and Dr Rachel Sabates-Wheeler.

The purpose of the meeting was to share ideas about the proposed phase two proposal and to lay the ground for the exploratory secondary data analysis that was to be done in year two. Such exchanges between the researchers in the North and the South are especially important for grooming young researchers.

Overview of year one

In the first year, formative research was done to lay the foundation for later work.

This first phase included a qualitative formative component, secondary data analysis using the Uganda National Household Survey data and a systematic review of literature about accessibility and utilization of services for the poor.

Systematic review

This work explored what has been studied on socio-economic differences in morbidity, access and utilisation of health care in Uganda.

A systematic review of published/unpublished literature from electronic databases and grey literature/formal reports from surveys done by government, bilateral and multi-lateral agencies and universities was done. The results showed that the poor and vulnerable experience a greater burden of disease but have lower access and utilization of health services than the less poor.

Distance to service points, perceived quality of care and availability of drugs were key determinants of utilization.

Other barriers included lack of skilled staff, late referrals, health worker attitude, cost of care, lack of knowledge about health related issues.

Changes in access to Health services.

The secondary data analysis was aimed at describing the changes in utilization of health services and their determinants that have occurred among the poor and those in rural areas between 2002/3 and 2005/6.

The poor were identified from wealth quintiles constructed using an asset based index derived from Principal Components Analysis (PCA). The probability of choice of health care provider was assessed using multi-level statistical models.

The results showed that cost and distance are still important barriers to seeking health services for the poor and the rural residents. Overall utilization of public and Private Not For Profit services by rural and poor populations has increased although private providers are still the major providers of services,

Community Perspectives of Quality Health Care

In this study the community's perspectives and perceptions on quality of health care delivery in two Uganda districts were examined. Community views were solicited and obtained using 8 focus group discussions, 6 in-depth and 12 key informant interviews.

User perceptions and definitions of the quality of health services depended on a number of variables related to technical competence, accessibility to services, interpersonal relations and presence of adequate drugs, supplies, staff and facility amenities.

The factors that were mentioned as affecting the quality of services delivered were inadequate trained health workers, shortage of essential drugs, poor attitude of the health workers, and long distances to health facilities.



Not many Ugandans can afford regular check-ups

“Academic research makes a crucial contribution to development but too often findings are kept within the research community. The media can play a part in communicating this knowledge to a wider audience. **Panos Relay Programme**

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The Makerere University School of Public Health is the leading institute of public health education and research in the country, and a regional centre of excellence in Africa. Its mission is to provide public health training that is demand driven, field-oriented and problem based and also carrying out research that is relevant.

DFID Department for International Development

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the part of the UK Government that manages Britain's aid to poor countries and works to get rid of extreme poverty through efforts such as improving health and education, securing more aid among many others.

About the Principal Investigator

Dr George Pariyo



Dr George William Pariyo is the principal investigator of the Future Health Systems study in Uganda and has published several research papers.

Qualifications:
MBChB; MSc; PhD

Designation:

Senior Lecturer/Head of the Department of Health Policy, Planning and Management at Makerere University School of Public Health.

Speciality:

Health Systems Management
Expertise: Teaching, Research and Consultancy work in areas of Primary Health Care, Health Policy, Health Planning and Management, Health Economics and Financing, Management of Decentralised Health Systems Monitoring and Evaluation.

Seeking more information?

For more details about the research products refer to the FHS website (www.futurehealthsystems.org) or the MUSPH and MOH resource center.