

A study on utilization of free service from Social Service Unit in Karnali academy of health science

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Abstract

Introduction: Nepal's Interim Constitution 2006 (BS 2063) established health as a fundamental right and the Three Year Interim Plan (TYIP) has accordingly provisioned for social security (service and facility related) programmes. In order to coordinate and effectively implement such services and facilities as required, it is important to create coordination units in hospitals. The Social Service Unit (SSU) is being established in Karnali Academy of Health Science, Jumla for the purpose Objectives: To find out the utilization of free service from social service unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science Jumla

Study Design: Retrospective research design was used to identify utilization of free service received from Social Service Unit in Karnali academy of Health Science.

Results: In this study, the total client visiting Social Service Unit for free service in Karnali Academy of Health Science within three years from 2077 shrawan 1st to 2080 asar 31th were 1410 as in first year 077/078 total client receiving service were 265 similarly in 078/079 and 079/080 were 373 and 772. Female service receiver were maximum in 077/789(146) and 079/80(388) and male (209) in 078/79. Maximum service receivers were of Jumla district and above 60 year of population.

Conclusion: This study proves that social service unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science has been functioning according to guideline prescribed by Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP)

Keywords: Utilization of free service; Poor; Senior Citizen; Social Service Unit; KAHS

1. Introduction

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy has been prepared to develop policies, strategies, plans and programs. The main goals of the GESI strategy are to create a favorable environment for integrating (mainstreaming) GESI, enhance the capacity of service providers and ensure equitable access to and use of health services by all groups, and improve the health seeking behaviors of marginalized castes and ethnic groups, using a rights-based approach¹.

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The mandate of The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 (2007) emphasized that every citizen shall have the right to basic health-care services free of cost, as provided by law². As a result, the Government of Nepal has provided essential healthcare services free of charge in district hospitals, primary healthcare centers, health posts and sub health posts, to all people³. The free health-care policy covers consultation and treatment, minor surgery, obstetric emergencies, basic and comprehensive obstetric care, radiographs, laboratory services, essential drugs (for a week) and transport by ambulance to a higher-level facility when a patient is referred⁴. As a result of this free health-care initiative, health-care access is steadily expanding; however, critical gaps still persist, and additional resources for health are required. 6 Patients in tertiary-care health facilities are still required to pay for services⁵.

The overall objective of the Social Service Unit (SSU) is to effectively facilitate and coordinate with hospital staff to provide free and partially free health care services to the target groups on a daily basis, and to manage their ease of access to such services in hospital. The major objectives of this unit are to identify the target groups on the basis of equity and equality, to keep records, and to provide the necessary support to the target groups on a daily basis. The services provided by the hospitals will be free (no cost) or partially free (reduced cost) based on the needs and nature of the patients (i.e. their identification as a target group) and the service(s) provided¹.

A study conducted in western Regional hospital and Lumbini zonal Hospital shows that Utilization of free health-care services by poor and marginalized people in the two tertiary-care hospitals was suboptimal: only 8.4% of patients using services were exempted from payment in Western Regional Hospital, whereas it was even fewer, at 2.7%, in Lumbini Zonal Hospital. There was also unintended use of services by non target people⁶. So to fulfill the mandates, every citizen will have the right to free basic health care service as provisioned by the State” and to know the status of service provided from the social service unit as to increase and ensure the target groups’ equitable access to and use of essential/basic health services; also to provide the necessary information for free or partially free basic, primary, secondary, and tertiary care services to target groups in hospitals; the researcher found the importance to find out the utilization of free service from social service unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science Jumla.

2. Materials and Methods

This retrospective study includes client who visited Social Service Unit (SSU) for free service of Karnali Academy of Health Sciences Teaching Hospital (KAHSTH), Jumla Nepal. It is a tertiary level 300 bedded hospital situated in high hilly region of Karnali Province, Jumla Nepal. The study was during the period of three year from 2077 Shrawan 1st to 2080 Asar 31th. The record of client attending the social service unit was from the record book and software record COAGENT EMR also the record were verified from record, maintained at the medical records department of KAHS. All respondents visiting social service unit for free process were included and others were excluded from the study. Data were entered into the MS excel and analyzed in SPSS version 15. Descriptive analysis was carried out. Ethical was taken from the Intuitional Review committee of Karnali Academy of Health Science.

2.1. Study Design

It is a retrospective study design. The study conducted among patients those who visited social service unit in Karnali Academy of Health in Jumla district from 2077 Shrawan 1st to 2080 Asar 31th. The study population consists of all clients visiting social Service Unit for free service. Data collected from the record of client attending the social service unit was from the record book and software record COAGENT EMR also the record were verified from record, maintained at the medical records department of KAHS.

3. Results

The total client visiting social service unit for free service in Karnali academy of Health Science within three years from 2077 Shrawan 1st to 2080 Asar 31th. As in first year 077/078 total client receiving service were 265 similarly in 078/079 and 079/080 were 373 and 772.

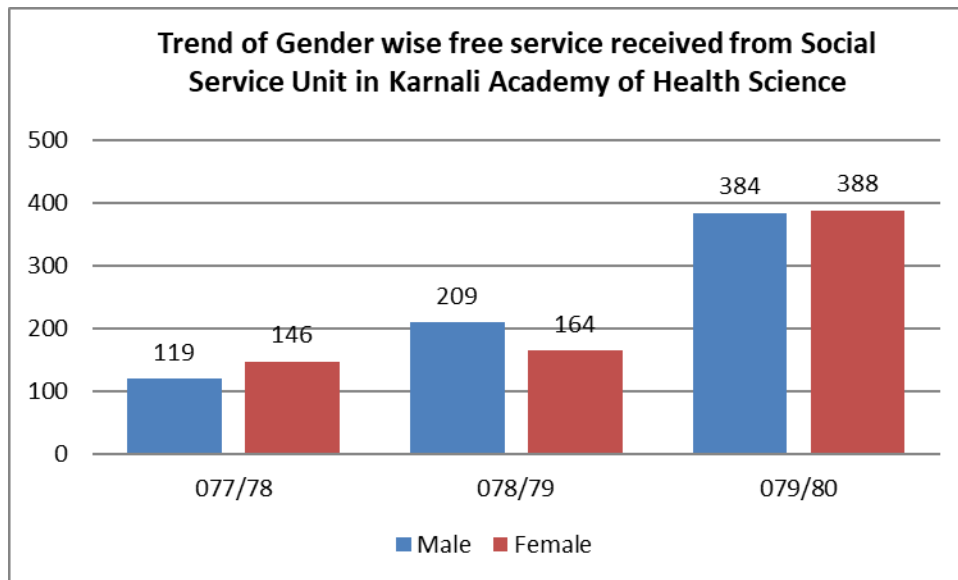


Figure 1 Trend of Gender wise free service utilization distribution received from Social Service Unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science

Figure 1 indices that the utilization of free service from Social Service Unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science in three year period according to gender wise distribution is maximum in Female in 077/078 and 079/80 and maximum utilization by male in year 078/79.

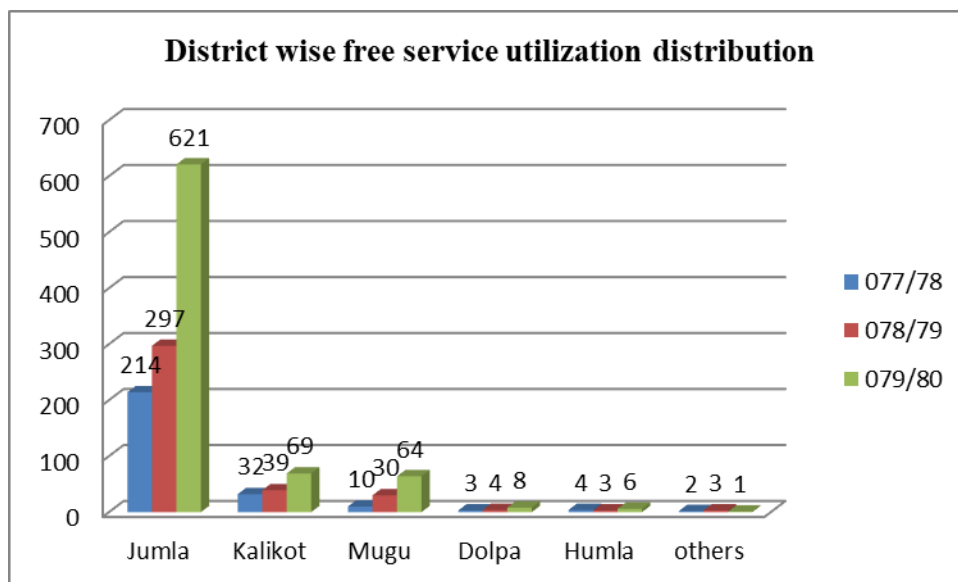


Figure 2 District wise free service utilization distribution of karnali Province

Figure 2 indices that the utilization of free service from Social Service Unit in karnali Academy of Health Science in three year period according to district wise distribution represents Maximum from Jumla in all three year and minimal other district.

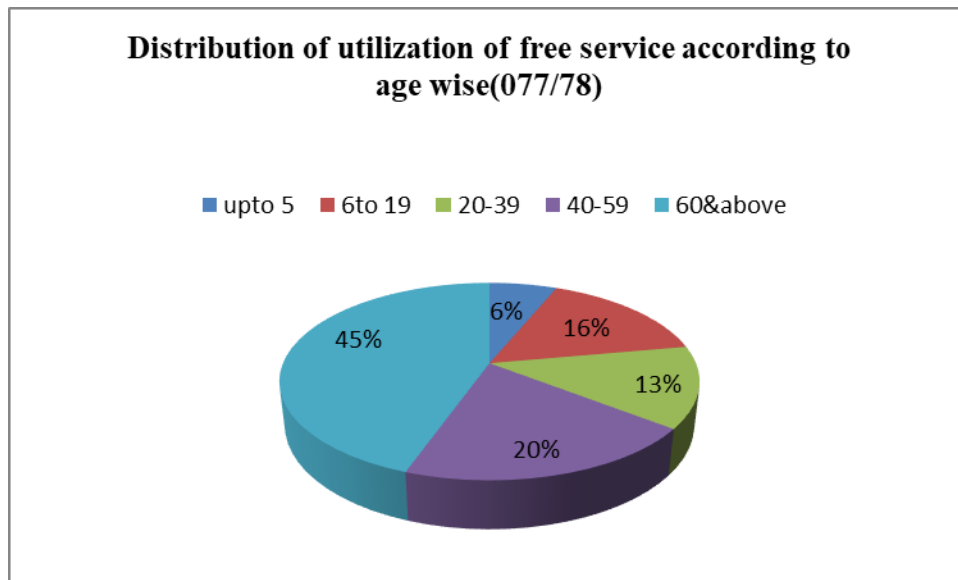


Figure 3 Distribution of utilization of free service according to age wise in first year

Figure 3 indices that the utilization of free service from Social Service Unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science in three year period according to age wise in distribution in first year is Maximum utilization by 60 years and above(45%) and minimum utilization by up to 5 years(6%) of age group.

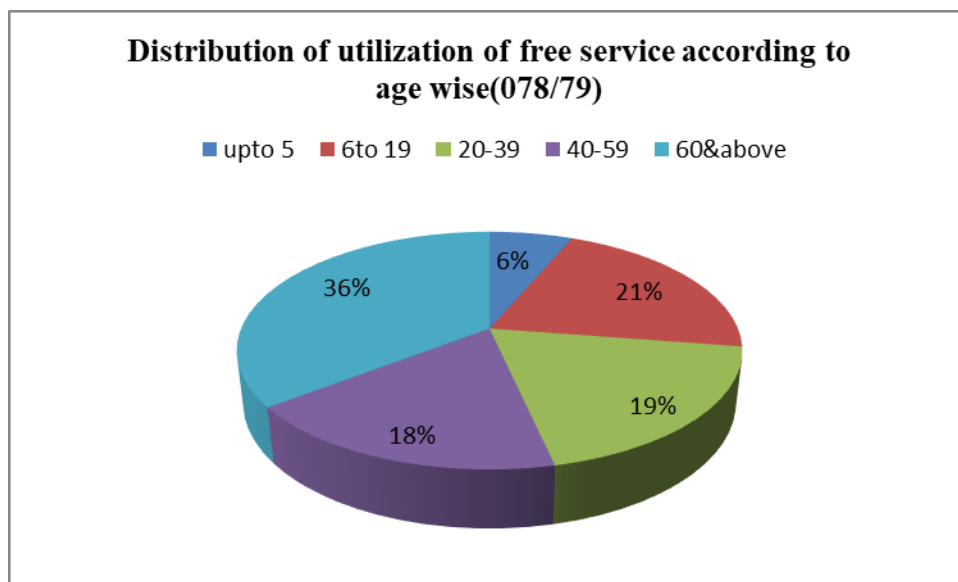


Figure 4 Distribution of utilization of free service according to age wise in second year

Figure 4 indices that the utilization of free service from social service unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science in three year period according to age wise distribution in second year is Maximum utilization by 60 years (36%) and above and minimum utilization by up to 5 years(6%) of age group.

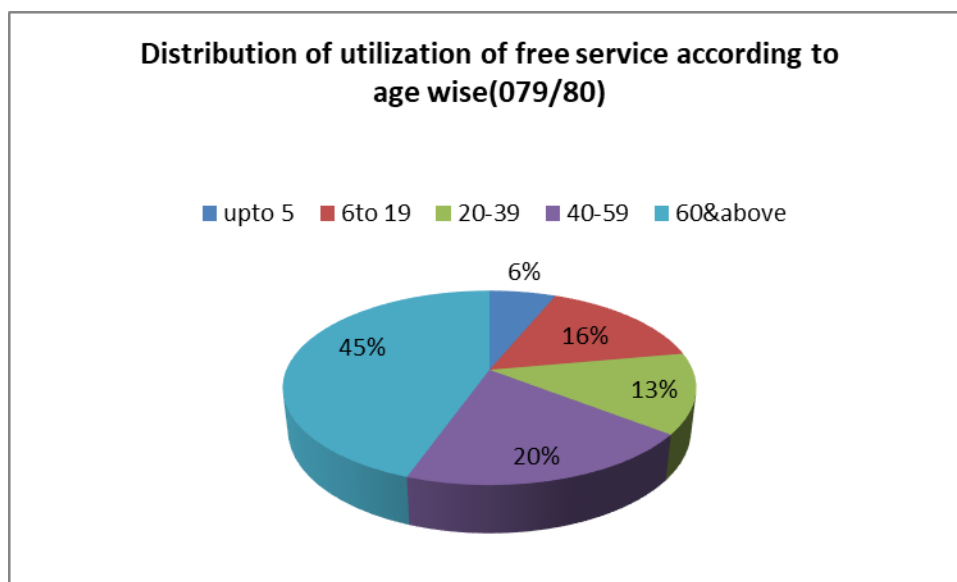


Figure 5 Distribution of utilization of free service according to age wise in third year

Figure 5 indices that the utilization of free service from Social Service Unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science in three year period according to age wise distribution in third year is Maximum utilization by 60 years (45%) and above and minimum utilization by up to 5 years(6%) of age group.

Table 1 Pattern of free service utilization from Social Service Unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science

S.N	Target Group	FY 077/78	Percentage (%)	FY 078/79	Percentage (%)	FY 079/80	Percentage
1	Senior Citizen	56	21	128	34	344	45
2	Poor	112	42	123	32	202	26
3	Helpless People	6	2	8	2	23	3
4	Gender Based Violence	49	19	64	17	149	19
5	Person with disability	6	2	1	0	4	1
6	Female Community Health Volunteer	2	1	2	1	2	0
7	Malnourished child	28	11	30	8	2	0
8	Bipanna Nagarik Ausadhi Upachar	3	1	5	1	34	5
9	Conflict Victim	3	1	10	3	2	0
10	Natural Disaster	0	0	0	0	7	1
11	Karnali Secondary School (KSS Deaf school)	0	0	2	1	3	0
	Total	265	100%	373	100%	772	100%

4. Discussion

In this study we found that total client receiving free service from Social Service Unit in Karnali Academy of Health Science were 1410 in three years from 2077 Shrawan 1st to 2080 Asar 31th. In first year total client were 265 in second years 373 and in third year 772 receiving free service from Karnali Academy of Health Science Jumla. Highest service receiver were female (146) in 077/78 and 079/80 (388) and highest male (209) in 078/79

The study by Basnet et al. showed that 83.3% of patients using free services were from the geographical district where the hospital was situated⁷ while the percentages in the present study were Jumla 1st year 214, second year 297 and third year 621 and Kalikot. This shows that access to Karnali academy of Health Science is comparatively easier access for the people of Jumla and Kalikot rather than other district from outside the geographical districts of KAHS. One of the important factors indicating ease of access to a hospital is the number of people from rural areas utilizing the free services.

This study found that the free services were utilized mostly by senior citizens (37%) and Poor patients (30%) followed by Gender Based violence survivors (18%) at karnali Academy of Health Science Jumla and this clearly shows that the Health Insurance programme by Nepal Government has not fully implemented in case of Jumla district so the client receiving free service is maximum Senior Citizen. A survey done in 13 districts by RTI International and CARE Nepal in December 2009, to assess implementation of the free health-care policy, found that use of free services in primary health-care centers and district hospitals was more common in ultra poor groups, followed by poor groups in all hospital departments: emergency, outpatient and inpatient⁸.

Limitation of the Study

The study is a retrospective study so it is being a limitation for the study itself. The different variables that the researcher wants to measure that may not be measurable due to unavailability of the data that are recorded in the register. As in future day's prospective study is needed to be done in the related subject matter. Using such limited resources findings may not be fit for generalization. Limited time and resources may not supplement the ideas. Even though based on formal data of the social service unit, it shows the baseline data for the further planning and change in the modalities of service provided from social service unit. Our research suffers from limitations such as insufficient sample size for qualitative research. Therefore, it gives preliminary findings only, and further research, including more interviews with staff and patients, is required to improve the current utilization of free health-care services in Karnali Academy of Health Science.

5. Conclusions

An important conclusion of this work is that there was good access to and utilization of free health-care services in the Karnali Academy of Health Science, Jumla. Also from the results we can observe that Karnali Academy of Health Science has provided free service according to prescribed guideline by Government of Nepal. This was mainly because the hospital provided an adequate educational programme to inform the population about the availability of free health-care services, and due to knowledge regarding free services and target groups among staff working in the hospitals.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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