



## **ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract:**

Health education is an effective tool that helps in improving health in developing nations. It not only teaches prevention and basic health knowledge but also conditions ideas that re-shape everyday habits of people with unhealthy lifestyles in developing countries. Quality health is a fundamental right of all citizens. This can only be achieved through effective health care services. The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of health education as tool for effective primary health care services. The paper discussed the concept of health education and the challenges of effective primary health care services, components of primary health care and the need for health education in the primary health care system. The practice of primary health care services cannot be effective without the proper implementation of health education. It therefore, recommended that the government at all levels should ensure that health education and well-trained health educators should form part of medical team for effective primary health care services.

**Key Words:** Health, Health Education, Primary Health Care Services

### **Introduction:**

Education for health begins with the people of the nation. It believes to motivate them with whatever their interests they may have in improving their living conditions. Its goal is to develop in them a sense of responsibility for health conditions for themselves and individuals, as members of families, and as communities. In communicable diseases control, the health education commonly includes an appraisal of what is known by a population about a disease, an assessment of habits and attitudes of the people as they relate to spread and the frequency of the disease and the presentation of specific means to remedy the observed deficiencies.

This type of conditioning not only affects the immediate receivers of such education but also future generations will profit from an improved and properly cultivated ideas about health that will eventually be deep-rooted with widely spread health education. Moreover, besides physical health prevention, health education can also provide the more support and help people deal healthier with situations of extreme stress, anxiety and depression or the other emotional disturbances to lessen the impact of these types of mental and emotional constituents, which can consequently be leads to detrimental physical effects.

Health is an important aspect of human life. It encompasses all those activities aimed at ensuring the protection of the body from diseases and promoting the good habits. According to World Health Organization (WHO, 1947), Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being of individuals and not the mere absence of diseases or infirmities. To achieve all these variables to make individuals health, Health education has an important role to play.

According to WHO (2008), primary health care is described as an essential health care system based on the practical scientifically sound and socially acceptable method and technology that made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community. Through their full participation and at a cost the community can afford at every stage of their development in the spirit of Self-reliance and Self-determination. The goal of the National Health Policy (1987) is to bring a comprehensive health care system that is based on the primary health care which is promotive, protective, preventive, restorative and rehabilitative to all citizens within the available resources so that individuals and communities can be assured of the productivity, social well-being and enjoyment of living. The health services, based on PHC among other things are; education concerning prevailing health problems and the methods of preventing and controlling them, promotion of food supply and proper nutritional, maternal and child care, including family planning, immunization against the major infectious diseases. Prevention and control of the locally endemic and epidemic diseases and the provision of essential drugs and supplies (Adeyemo, 2005).

### **Challenges of Effective Primary Health Care Service:**

The government is committed to the quality and accessible public health services through provision of the primary health care in rural areas as well as the provision of preventive and curative services. PHC is provided by the local government authority through health centers and health posts that they are staffed by nurses and midwives, community health officers and health technicians, community health extension workers and with the physicians.

Other challenges facing effective primary health care services are the lack of health education in the rural communities, poor facilities and equipment such as bad or inadequate vehicles for the transporting the health workers for immunization services, inadequate finances for day to day running of PHC services

because most of the internally generated income of local government is meager and insufficient for the effective PHC services (Adeyemo, 2005).

#### **Components of Primary Health Care:**

The essential components of the primary health care observed by WHO (1987) are; health education concerning, prevailing health troubles and the methods of preventing and controlling them; upgrading of food supply and proper nutrition; adequate supply of the safe water and basic sanitation; maternal and the child health care, including family planning, immunization against major infectious diseases; prevention and control of local endemic and the epidemic diseases. Appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries and provision of essential drugs and supplies.

#### **Health Education as a Tool for Effective PHC Service:**

Health education is the process of persuasion of people to accept measures which will improve their health and to reject those that will have an adverse effect on health. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of health education and effectiveness of primary health care services.

Government and the other stakeholders on health has made tremendous efforts in improving the life and health of their citizens by creating health facilities such as, provision of portable water supply and good sanitary and waste disposal. Good roads network and provision of primary health services which are mostly equipped with the health personnel such as physicians, nurses, lab attendant and nutritionist. All these provisions are more effective in the urban areas than their rural counterpart as a result of health education provided via audio- visual and audio - visual media which makes the urban persons to have more information about the usefulness of these services.

#### **Concept of Health Education:**

Health Education plays a central role in the development of healthy, inclusive and equitable social, psychological and the physical environment. It reflects current best practice using an empowering, multi-dimensional, multi-professional approach which relates to all setting organizations, including the community, schools, health services at the workplace (Gordon, 2008). Health Education helps in providing health knowledge, enhances wellness behaviours, promote health situations, facilitate healthful relationship and enables community members make responsible decisions. The Joint Committee on Health Education and Promotion Terminology (2001) defined Health Education as any combination of planned learning experiences based on sound theories that provide individuals, groups, and communities the opportunity to acquire information and the skills needed to make quality health decisions.

Health Education at the Primary Health Care helps to address issues related to disease prevention; consumer health, environmental, emotional, sexual health, first aid, safety and disaster preparedness, substance abuse prevention. Human health education plays the following vital roles in the implementation of primary health care components. Johnson (2010), identified the roles as immunization, maternity services, the child health, communicable diseases control, environmental health, nutrition, school health services to aid family life education.

#### **Recommendations:**

Following recommendations identified as the importance of health education as a tool for effective health system, these are;

- Government at all levels must ensure that health education and well-trained health educators be part of the medical team in the PHC centers
- There is the need for the maintenance of minimum health standard to improve housing conditions. Adequate potable water supply, environmental sanitation and food supply for the sustenance of good health conditions is must.
- Health education should be provided for the community so as to make them informed about health decisions and also the ways of preventing communicable disease.

#### **Implications:**

This paper will contribute to knowledge in the following manner;

- It will improve the health of the community persons and alleviate their poverty by educating them on the usefulness of the PHC giving a sound mind in a sound body and health serves as an integral part of overall development.
- It gives priority to the improved living conditions of the people beyond the present poverty level, so that they enhance better healthy living.
- All the various components of Primary health care services can only succeed if they are widely accepted by the individuals and the community. Health education is of the most significant tool in primary health care services because individual behavior has a greater effect on the health.

In India, the methods of disseminating the health education to people can be described as still very low especially, to the mostly affected areas which are the rural areas where there are poor electric supplies and it is difficult to listen to or watch the health information on electronic media.

The role of health education is to assure the community and individuals about the importance of health and the services rendered by the PHC. One of the best ways to achieve effective PHC is to ensure the educating role that spread out and the end effect which will be equally widespread throughout the population.

**Conclusion:**

The practice of the Primary Health Care services can be effective with the inculcation of health education among the community members. Involvement of the trained Health educators in the planning and implementation of Primary Health Care system will definitely help to remove the obstacles in the effectiveness of PHC services. There is dire need offollow a national approach to health educator for behavioral change and benefit of the society.

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