

EXPLORING THE INTEGRATION OF NUTRITION CARE SERVICES INTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN NTUNGAMO DISTRICT.

BY

**HOPE KATUSIIME
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ABSTRACT

This study explored the integration of nutrition care services into the Health Care system in Ntungamo District. The general objective of this study was to explore the factors influencing progress in integration of nutrition care services into the Health Care system in Public Health facilities in Ntungamo District; as a means of increasing access to and utilization of nutrition services. The study also described the knowledge and attitude of staff on integration of Nutrition care services in Public Health facilities, to identify the systems and structures in place for promoting integration of nutrition care services into Health Care system in Public Health Facilities and to examine the available policies and guidelines on integration of Nutrition care services in Public Health facilities in Uganda, and their utilization in Ntungamo District. It was a cross sectional descriptive study involving 196 respondents and carried out in one hospital and three HCIVs. Quantitative data was collected by using open ended questions and qualitative data was obtained through Focus Group Discussions, and Key Informant Interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 16.0 while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis. There was minimal integration of Nutrition care services in Public Health facilities in Ntungamo District. The factors significantly influencing the level of integration were, Cadre of staff, nutrition trainings received, holding regular meetings, and usage of the national nutrition care policy and guidelines. The policies and guidelines on integration of Nutrition care services in Public Health facilities in Ntungamo District were less regularly implemented although they were available in most health facilities. In regard to examining the association between the policies and guidelines to integration of nutrition care services, it was evident that integration of nutrition care services differed by cadre of staff, attendance nutrition trainings, conducting meetings at the facilities and usage of the national nutrition care policy and guidelines. From the findings, it is recommend that health facilities hold regular (at least quarterly) meetings to review nutrition indicators as one of the policy structures and this should be done by in charges of health facilities. In order to improve the integration and performance of integrated services, it was recommended that the district: Increases funding to nutrition activities in district budget and work plan, Conducts trainings to improve on capacity building of all health workers including Doctors and clinical officers and enhances usage/utilization of nutrition care policies be emphasized by Ministry of Health across the country.