

Implementing the Ideal Clinic Program at Selected Primary Healthcare Facilities in South Africa

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Abstract

Background: Primary healthcare (PHC) in South Africa often experiences crucial challenges that lead to patients' negative experiences regarding their care, compromising the significant role that PHC services could play in health promotion and disease prevention. The primary purpose of implementing the Ideal Clinic (IC) in South Africa was to improve patients' care quality at the clinics. There seems to be a paucity of studies determining professional nurses' experiences when implementing the IC. **Purpose:** This study aimed to explore and describe professional nurses' experiences regarding implementing the IC at three selected clinics in the Makhado local area. **Study method:** A qualitative phenomenological research design was used to explore professional nurses' experiences regarding IC implementation. Purposive sampling was used to select 15 professional nurses working at the three selected clinics. Data were collected using semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached. Trustworthiness was ensured by applying Lincoln and Guba's four criteria, i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Limpopo Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee, and permission to conduct the study was obtained from Limpopo Province Department of Health Research and Ethics Committee. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. **Results:** The following themes emerged from the study findings: perceived benefits of the IC on the primary healthcare services provided to the community, challenges experienced by professional nurses when implementing the IC program, and challenges related to the supply of resources for implementing the IC. The study results revealed that, although the IC aimed to improve the overburdened PHC facilities in SA, the professional nurses still experienced some challenges when implementing the IC program. Some of the challenges faced were a lack of knowledge and training in the IC program, poor infrastructure and the shortage of equipment, and inadequate provision of support by line managers, all of which resulted in poor-quality patient care. **Conclusion:** This study revealed that the introduction and implementation of the IC can have potential benefits to the community and the primary healthcare system. However, it was not introduced and appropriately implemented, which resulted in professional nurses experiencing several challenges. The national department of health needs to strengthen the program's implementation through proper training, consultation, and continuous support of the nurses. Provision of quality equipment and supplies is also recommended.

Keywords: Ideal Clinic; infrastructure; professional nurses

Biography

Masenyani Oupa Mbombi is working as a Professional Nurse in ICU/Theatre at Mankweng Hospital and University of Limpopo. Completed Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in nursing at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

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