

## ABSTRACT

Over the past century, life expectancy for both men and women has increased drastically from forty to sixty years and above. This is attributed to a drift from preventive to clinical medicine, the advent of antibiotics and the advancement of medical technology however the increase in life expectancy among the older persons has consequently been coupled with the manifestation of lifestyle and chronic diseases thus making the elderly prone to ill health.

This was a descriptive cross sectional study conducted in Kyere Sub County and a total of 256 older persons were interviewed.

256 respondents were interviewed and responses recorded in questionnaires the collected raw data was coded, entered into the excel spread sheet and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science version 16.0 (SPSS).

The results indicate that the magnitude of the older persons utilizing health care services is 57.03 percent and it was noted that 94 percent of respondents said that Family had a significant influence in the utilization of health care services. Other factors like Religion with 77.34 percentage and Peer influence with a 28.91 percentage although insignificant were noted to influence uptake of health care services. The attitude of health care workers is an important variable in determining the utilization of health care with 88.28 respondents saying it was good while 11.72 percent said it was bad.

Measures required to increase the uptake of health care services by the older persons include; Carrying out a needs assessment among the elderly, mainstreaming the existing training curriculum for health workers at all levels in order to roll out specialists who can tackle health ailments of the elderly and provision of drugs for the treatment of health ailments that affect the elderly.

Establish nursing homes for the elderly to bridge the gap of filial responsibility for the elderly persons with no children and special outreach programme on good health practices targeting the elderly should be promoted. Income generating activities should also be promoted so as to break the viscous cycle of poverty. In conclusion, more research needs to be done on factors affecting the utilization of health care services among the elderly because literature is so scarce in Uganda.