

ABSTRACT

Routine immunization rates have remained low for years as cited in the Jinja district database. Therefore the district is experiencing frequent epidemic out breaks of immunize-able diseases. Given this background, this study is aimed at finding out the factors hindering complete in Jinja district particularly Buwenge.

Objectives of the study: To determine the current levels of immunization among children aged 12-23 months in Buwenge sub-county, to assess the knowledge and attitude of caretakers towards routine immunization and identify factors within the health system and community in general which hinder full and complete routine immunization; to also obtain strategies to improve routine immunization coverage.

Methodology: The study was a cross-sectional descriptive survey. Data collection was done using both qualitative and quantitative methods and these included: use of questionnaire, observation and documentation.

Results: The current immunization status of children aged between 12-23 months is 68% of which 84% had immunization cards. Caretakers who used health centres for immunizing their children were 90% as only 10% used private clinics and outreach services. Most of the caretakers live within 5km from the health facility (90%). Almost all caretakers (99%) gave at one reason why immunization is important. Caretakers knowledge about immunization and immunize-able diseases was good, as most of the respondents (75%) knew more than three immunize-able disease and at least 25% mentioned more than 1 or 2 diseases. The attitude of most of the caretakers (67%) towards immunization was positive. Factors inhibiting completion of immunization were; shortages of vaccines, forgetfulness of caretakers, inadequate staffing in health centres, demoralized health workers due to delayed allowances, private health clinic workers have inadequate knowledge on immunization, unfounded rumours about the side effects if vaccines, lack of involvement of stakeholders and inadequate community mobilization were among the reasons for inhibiting routine immunization in Buwenge sub-

county.

Conclusion: The levels of complete immunization coverage are still below the target level of 90% of immunized children. However complete immunization coverage in Buwenge has improved and is relatively good. The factors hindering full coverage were: inadequate and irregular supply of vaccines, false rumour about vaccines and their side effects. Recommendation A number of recommendations were suggested toward improving levels and these included; training and equipping all health workers in immunization procedures(EPI) and communication skills, educating the community about the immunization process and strengthening community mobilization using a multi-sectoral approach. The district health team should also take responsibility of delivering vaccine and other necessities in health units on time and UNEPI should abide by its schedule as programmed and health workers should be paid their allowance on time and promptly.