

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Gender based violence is defined as —violence involving men and women in which the female is usually the victim, and which is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women (UNFPA, 1998). Violence against women is an important factor of concern in relation to health and development and impedes on women’s human rights. Violence is known to affect reproductive health of women and the health of children which is a result of gender inequality. Some Millennium Development Goals can best be realized if violence against women is reduced.

Aim of study: The study assessed the influence of gender based violence on the utilization of reproductive health services by the women of Erute South Health Sub-District in Lira District with objectives of identifying the various forms of gender based violence, establishing the effects of forms of gender based violence on utilization of reproductive health services by women, establishing the effect of gender based violence perpetrators on women’s ability to utilize reproductive health services and to determine the effect of GBV health based consequences on the utilization of reproductive health services.

Methodology: A cross sectional study design was used in this research where convenient sampling was used to sample Sub counties; simple random sampling was applied to sample parishes and a combination of simple random and systematic sampling methods were used to sample households and the respondents. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to sample households with women of ages 15-49 years. The data was analyzed using mainly SPSS statistical package.

Results: The findings reveal that GBV is still very high in lira district with a percentage of 54.8 testifying to having been abused by an intimate partner.

The commonest form of GBV is hitting, beating, and battering with 40.8%, a proportion of 43.1% fearing to report GBV due to shame, those exposed to GBV in the last six months were 46.1% and a proportion of 161 (36.9%) of women out of 436 respondents agreed to have been mistreated by their partners on learning that they had gone or were planning to go to health facility to seek reproductive health services.

This therefore leaves a lot to be desired in terms of policy formulation and enforcement by all stakeholders.

The multivariate analysis revealed that the major GBV factors which significantly influence the utilization of reproductive health services include reporting of violence to clan leaders (OR > 4.231 95% CI:2.033- 8.028), experience of sexual violence (OR > 4.436 95% CI: 0.258 – 76.174), GBV in pregnancy (OR > 7.712 95% CI: 3.336 – 17. 826), Seeking for permission to go for reproductive health services (OR > 1.573 95%CI:0.727 – 3.403), making of financial decisions (OR > 2.2867 95% CI:1.066 – 2.687) and lastly but not least escorting a woman to deliver (OR > 52.079 95% CI: 0.555 – 52.079).