

Objective: The study aims at contributing to the ways of improving patient safety in Ugandan hospitals through putting much emphasis on medical incident reporting.

Methodology: The study was conducted using self administered structured questionnaires that were given to 158 health workers that were directly involved in providing clinical care to the patients in this hospital. Data was analyzed using the statistical package for social scientists.

Principle component analysis was used at multivariate level of analysis.

Results: The empirical findings indicate that medical incidents do occur at Mbarara regional referral hospital among which medication errors are the most witnessed (89.9%) compared to diagnostic, surgical and preventive errors. Factors that would motivate health workers in this hospital are knowledge about medical incidents, good communication system in the hospital whereas lack of a management incident team was found a barrier to incident reporting in this hospital.

Research limitations: The study is limited failure to review patient records to confirm the presence of the witnessed medical incidents by the health workers to limited time and the technicality involved.

Practical implications: The managerial implications of the findings of this study is that in order to improve medical incident reporting in this hospital, the administration must ensure that health workers are trained and knowledgeable about medical incidents and their importance in ensuring patient safety. Guidelines on medical incident reporting need to be in place to guide health workers on incident reporting.

Originality: Despite the fact that studies about medical incident reporting have been done elsewhere, limited research has been carried out in Uganda.

This paper therefore makes its contribution by providing information that is relevant for filling this gap that exists most especially to policy makers in the health ministry.