

The main objective of this study was to determine factors influencing availability of essential medicines in public health facilities in Uganda. Health facility management factors were determined, influence of rational medicine use was also determined and assessment of stock and stores management factors on the availability of essential medicines in public health facilities in Uganda was also done.

A cross sectional study design was used during the study and both qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

The result of this study show that the public health facilities which had trained logistic managers at the health facility, had trained and functional health unit management committees, those which based on formulas to know how the facility medicine re - supply quantities are determined, had a ready transport facility for drugs and supplies, those which used requisition as a procurement policy for obtaining drugs and supplies and those which had having an Essential Drug List at this facility were more likely to have high essential drug availability scores.

About 65% of the respondents in this study confirmed the existence of a trained logistics and supplies management team which is very small compared to the target of 100%.

In conclusion drug shortages present an ongoing challenge for health care providers and health facility personnel. The management of drug shortages in hospitals and health systems is particularly complex because these facilities routinely treat patients with acute or emergent conditions, deliver a significant number of medically necessary or single-source products, and use high-cost new drug technologies.

In response to drug shortages, health systems must act rapidly to identify and obtain the drug, or the alternative product, to avoid disruptions in patient care and to provide uninterrupted, therapeutically equivalent, safe drug therapy, preferably at comparable costs. Health facilities should be advised by the Ministry of Health to use the computerized system to control their inventories, more training of staffs in record keeping and drug quantification is necessary if accurate data is to be generated. Establish contact with other sites or health systems and identification of alternative drugs or therapeutic equivalents and following good inventory-management practices in health care, develop timely communication system and implementation plans will improve on the availability of essential medicines in our health care facilities in Uganda.