ABSTRACT

The study was on Inventory Management and Availability of Medicine- Case Study of Mbale Regional Referral Hospital was conducted in Mbale, Uganda from November, 2012 to September, 2013. The objectives of the research were to describe the various inventory management techniques, to determine the accuracy and completeness of the stock records, to identify factors contributing to availability of medicines, and to determine the relationship between inventory management and availability of medicines.

The study design was descriptive and cross-sectional. The target population comprised the healthcare staff in the hospital numbering 102. The census for the different groups of respondents was taken to represent the population. Thus the sample size comprises 102 respondents.

The data was collected using questionnaire, key informant‘s interview guide, checklists, and documentary review. The questionnaire was administered on the respondents on a drop-and-pick basis by the researcher and two other research assistants. The collected data was sorted, coded, and analyzed using SPSS Version 17.0. A univariate analysis of the data was done and the results presented in form of descriptive statistics, while the bi-variate analysis was done using Chi-square and p-values. At multivariate level the analysis was done using the multilinear regression analysis.

The major finding of the study was that the inventory management techniques being used had a Chi-square value of 16.777 which is not statistically significant. This was also buttressed by the p-value which was 0.158. The study further found that receipt of medicines in time after they have been ordered had a Chi-square value of 72.902 which not statistically significant. However the p-value was 0.000 which means it is statistically significant in determining availability of medicines.

The following recommendations were made: improving the knowledge of the staff and their duties on effective medicines inventory management of staff through training and senstitisation with specific emphasis on methods of calculating minimum stock and stock record accuracy; such training should be facilitated by expert(s) in medicines and other health supplies management.

The researcher further recommends for good stock management through effective and close supervision aimed at making the staff to understand the different types of inventory management practices. Emphasis should also be given to the significance of having accurate, complete and correct medicines stock records. Other recommendations included reducing the lead time from the present quarterly system to monthly system. Much as availability of medicines is related to effective inventory management, it was further recommended that, quantification, ordering/procurement of medicines should be done while taking into consideration the implication of non-availability of medicines to the citizenry..

The findings of this study should be generalisable to other regional referral hospitals in Uganda. This study was a necessity in order to end the problem of availability of medicines due to ineffective or poor inventory management. Furthermore, the need to follow and implement the recommendations given could not be overemphasised.