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Research paper

Know your health status; not only at world health day: A community service held at the University of Namibia 2017

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Abstract

The overall purpose of this article is to describe how the World Health Day was celebrated at the University of Namibia in 2017. University of Namibia as one of the higher institutions of learning in Namibia is celebrating the world health day yearly, mainly to promote health and prevent ill health, through partaking in the health campaigns. In 2017, the University of Namibia had conducted a mini survey and the main aims of the survey were twofold, firstly, to determine whether the students at the University of Namibia are visiting their general practitioners regularly for medical examination particular on tests like blood pressure, glucose and eye's test; and secondly to provide information about the importance of general medical check up to the students of the University of Namibia. Purposeful convenience method was used to select the sample and structural questionnaires were employed to gather data. The results revealed that the majority 34% of the students at the University of Namibia never went for medical examination to detect disease early. Recommendations ~~were~~ made based on the findings is that everyone to take initiative and visit any health facility (public or private) for medical examinations as soon as possible and not only to wait to be tested on world health day, since it might be too late.

Keywords: *Health; Medical examination; Status; World Health Day.*

1. Introduction

The "World Health Day" was created in 1948 during the First World Assembly and since 1950 it has been cerebrated on the 7th of April each year. The main aim of the World Health Day is to raise an awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of a concern for the World Health Organization (Searo, 2017). The University of Namibia is also taking part each year in the celebration of the World Heath Day by providing the free health service to the students mainly to prevent diseases and to promote good health. The free health service is mainly organized by the Community Health Department within the School of Nursing.

According to the demographic, health surveys series, diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (like cholesterol disease, high blood pressure) and chronic respiratory illnesses are among the top 10 diseases and top 15 causes of death in Namibia (WHO / Regional Office for Africa, 2010 -2014). Most of the diseases can be managed better if detected early, for instance, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, obesity and cholesterol and others, others can be totally prevented, for example, diseases caused by factors such as obesity, smoking and alcohol abuse. If cars are receiving regular check-up, why not human being which is prone to deadly diseases that can be detected early and treated or even prevented?

According to WHO (2017) it is advisable to reduce the major health-risk factors, for example, unhealthy diet, tobacco use, physical inactivity and alcohol abuse. In addition, it is also good to visit the health facility regularly for general examinations in order for the diseases to be detected as early as possible so that the treatment can be initiated as soon as possible. General examinations is clinical preventive services usually delivered by primary health care clinicians to persons with no signs and symptoms of illness as part of a routine health care process (Clinician Handbook, 1998).

2. Problem statement

Most of the students at University of Namibia are following very tight schedule on daily basis, and the possibility is there that they are not getting chance to visit their medical general practitioners or health facility at the campus for general examinations. Some might not have means to visit their doctors since the health facility at the campus is only functioning during the week days. Some students might have time and means to visit their doctors or to visit the health facility at the campus, but they might lack adequate knowledge about the importance of undergoing the medical examination at least once a year. Lacking such knowledge, may prohibit a student not to have general medical examinations regular. Therefore, the initiative was taken to organize a Health Day at the University of Namibia during the month of April (when all countries are cerebrating the World Heath's day) mainly to get an answer to this question: Do the students at University of Namibia undertake regular medical examination?

3. Aims of the study

The main aims of the study were twofold, firstly, to determine whether students are visiting their general practitioners regularly for general medical examinations / tests; and secondly to provide information about the importance of general medical examinations to the students of the University of Namibia.

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4. Specific objectives of the study

The following objectives were identified for the study:

- To assess whether students at The University of Namibia are taking good care of their health through visiting their doctors for medical examination regularly (at least once a year).
- To determine how often students go for three important tests namely: blood pressure (to detect hypertension), eyes sight (to detect poor sight), and glucose (to detect Diabetic Mellitus).

5. Study design and methods

According to Christensen (2004), a research design is a strategy specifying the procedure to be used in seeking the answer to the research question and also stipulates how to collect and analyse the data. The researchers have looked critically at the objectives of this study and the nature of the problem, and realizes that it is highly appropriate to use a quantitative approach in order to obtain the goal of the study, since it provides a more complete picture of the issues that are being addressed, the target audiences, and the effectiveness of the program (Weinreich, 2006). A mini-survey has been conducted, and purposeful convenience technique was employed, whereby structured questionnaires were used to gather data. Fifty (50) structured questionnaires were completed by students visited temporary health stall (at library, main campus) that specific day of the World Health day. The sample is small due to financial constraints and mainly time limit since the World Health day was only cerebrated for a half day at the University of Namibia.

6. Ethical issues

The main ethical principles that govern research that involves human subjects are: respect, beneficence, and justice (Callahan & Hobbs, 2010; Lund Research Limited, 2010) and all three afore mentioned ethical principles were followed in this study to protect the rights of the research participants.
Principle of respect for persons: No participant was coerced to be part of the study. All necessary information were provided to the participant, and the researchers ensured that participant understood the objectives of the study to which enable them to participate voluntarily. Each participant was explained to withdraw anytime from the study if he/she so wished.

7. Principle of beneficence

The researchers did ensure that participants were protected from any types of harm. The questionnaires did not contained any sensitive question and the participants were explained the choice of withdrawing from the study or stopping if they feel uncomfortable.

8. Principle of justice

The reported findings will be shared with concerned parties in such a way that the participants will remain anonymous. Permission was granted by the School of Nursing, and the students were asked individual if they grant permission to complete the questionnaire.

9. Results and discussions

The questionnaire used was consisted of two sections, of which section A covered the demographic information, while section B covered specific health questions namely medical examination, blood pressure, glucose and eyes tests. The total participants who took part in the survey were 50.

10. Gender

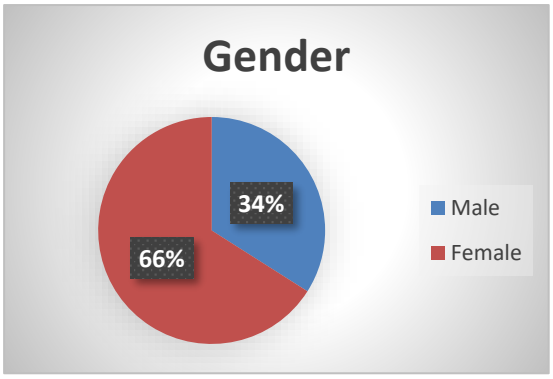


Fig. 1: Gender.

The majority of the participants 66% (n=33) who took part in the study were female, only 34% (n=17) were male. In contrary, a study conducted among college students in resource poor setting in Ethiopia by Tadesse and Alemu (2014), screened hypertension revealed that the majority (74.4%) were male, only few (25.6%) were female.

11. Age range

Table 1: Age Range

Age range	Frequency	Percent
18-24	19	38.0
25-34	14	28
35-44	10	20.0
45-50	3	6.0
51 and above	4	8.0
Total	50	100

The majority 38% (n=19) of the participants were between aged 18-24; followed by 28% (n=14) those aged between 25-34. Only (n=4) 8% was from the age of 51 and above. This could be that, generally the majority of students at University are young and those above the 51 years could be already working and able to consult their private clinicians for medical examinations.

Faculty

Table 2: Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Health Science	1	2.0
Education	10	20.0
Humanities and Social Science	11	22.0
Economic and Management Science	9	18.0
Natural Resources and Agriculture	2	4.0
Science	3	6.0
Information and Technology	2	4.0
Other	12	24.0
Total	50	100.0

Out of 100% participants, only 2% (n=1) are from the Faculty of health Science, while the majority were coming from other faculties for instance faculty of Humanity with 22% (n=11). Someone expect the majority of the participants to come from the Faculty of Health since they are the once dealing with health issues, but it was not the case in this study

12. Academic year of study

Table 3: Academic Year of Study

Academic year	Frequency	Percent
1st year	13	26.0
2nd year	11	22.0
3rd year	11	22.0
4th year	15	30.0
Total	50	100.0

The majority of participants 30% (n=15) were in their final academic year of study, followed by 26% (n=13) in their first academic year of study, only 22% (n=11) are in their 2nd and 3rd year respectively.

13. Medical examinations

Table 4: Medical Examinations

Per year	Frequency	Percent
Once a year	15	30
Twice to four times a year	15	30
Monthly	3	6
Never	17	34
Total	50	100

The results revealed that the majority of the participants 34% (n=17) never went for general examinations in their life. 30% (n=15) are undergone general examinations once a year or twice a year respectively.According to Health Status (1998-2017) the national average for general medical examination is at least once a year to make sure that nothing is going on with you that may need urgent attention.

14. Blood pressure test

Table 5: Blood Pressure Test

Per year	Frequency	Per cent
Once a year	16	32
Twice to four times a year	15	30
Monthly	10	20
Never	9	18
Total	50	100

Out of 100% participants, only 32% (n=16) undergone blood pressure examinations yearly, while18% (n=9) never went for the blood pressure examinations in their life. High blood pressure is another killer disease that can be easily remedied with drugs, but if left untreated can cause heart attack and stroke, therefore is good to visit the doctor more frequently (Health Status, 1998-2017).

Hypertension (high blood pressure) causes considerable morbidity and mortality worldwide. However, evidence on the burden of hypertension and associated factors are lacking among college students in resource-poor settings. Tadesse and Alemu, (2014) conducted a cross-sectional study in Ethiopia among a total of 610 college students who were screened for hypertension. The findings were as follows: 74.4% (453) were male and 25.6% (157) female with the male to female sex ratio of 2.9:1. The prevalence of hypertension was 7.7%. Higher rates of hypertension were observed among male [AOR: 3.12, 95% CI (1.16- 8.36)], overweight [AOR: 6.92, 95% CI; (2.65-18.07)] and participants who had sleep duration of ≤5 hours [AOR: 3.48, 95% CI (1.69-7.15)]. Alcohol and smoking is also a contributing factor of hypertension. The findings of Tadesse and Alemu, (2014) pointed out that 2.6% (16) of the students reported smoking cigarettes of whom 40% (6) were daily smokers. About 10% reported current khat chewing. Out of the khat chewers, 9.8% of the males chewed khat daily. About 7% of the students took alcohol on daily.

15. Eye test

Table 6: Eye Test

Per year	Frequency	Percent
Once a year	19	38
Twice to four times per year	2	4
Monthly	1	2
Never	28	56
Total	50	100

Only 38% (n=19) are testing their eyes once a year, while the majority of the participants 56% (n=28) never went for eyes test in their life.According Heiting (2000-2017) a comprehensive eye exam is recommended every two years for adults ages 18 to 60, and annual exams for seniors age 61 and older to maintain a lifetime of healthy vision.

16. Glucose test

Table 7: Glucose Test

	Frequency	Percent
Once a year	17	34
Twice a year	11	22
Monthly	1	2
Never	21	42
Total	50	100

The majority of the participants) 42% (n=21) never went in their life for glucose test 22%, (n=11) went twice a year for glucose test, while 34 % (n=17) went once a year. Glucose test help to detect Diabetic Mellitus as early as possible, therefore it is very important to get regular test. Diabetes is a silent disease and many people become aware when they suffer from that life threatening complications. Diabetes is also a public health problem (Ahmed, Waslien, Sumaie, Prakash, &Allafi, 2009).

A study conducted by Hussaini and Mustafa, (2016) in Kuwait evaluated the general knowledge of diabetes on 4333 adolescents and revealed the following: For "General knowledge about diabetes" section's scores were 71.0%, "Knowledge of risk factors of diabetes" 63%, "Knowledge of symptoms and complications" 55.8%, "Knowledge about treatment and management" 62.7%, and "Knowledge of monitoring diabetes" 72.3%. The results indicated that the students had average knowledge of diabetes, although there were areas of shortage. The students performed best in the general knowledge section and worst in symptoms and complications of diabetes section.

17. Conclusions

~~If cars as well as airplanes are receiving regular services, why not human being?~~ This study revealed that the majority of the students 34% at University of Namibia never went for any medical examinations in their life. This practice can easily put their lives in danger of detecting the disease at late stage. Therefore, the results from this study will be shared with the Unam community so that everyone involved can take positive action as earlier as possible.

18. Recommendation

This study recommend that every person (not only students) should to take initiative and visit any health facility (public or private) just to know their health status as early as possible, therefore, not only to wait to be tested on the World Health Day, since it might be too late.

19. Acknowledgements

We thank all the students who took the time to participate in this study; without their participation, this study would not have been a success or even been possible.

20. Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) which may have inappropriately influenced them.

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