Health minister opens ten ART clinics in remote areas

Shouting at women in labour helps, say health workers

...a third have seen mistreatment of patients

By Patience Nyangove recently in Liverpool, UK

POOR quality of care that includes abusive care by public health care workers in African countries has led to more pregnant women shunning primary health centres.

A study entitled “Provider and client perspectives on maternity care in Namibia: results from two cross-sectional studies”, by Jennifer Wesson Ndapeva Hanumainine, Claire Viadro, Martha Carlough, Pamuel Mupiya and Pearl Kulimugog made public online on 5 September 2018 that involved medical officers, matrons, and enrolled nurses working in Namibia’s 35 district and referral hospitals.

Cases of public health care workers ill-treating patients are also quite common in Namibia. The study further states that respondents who were dissatisfied with their workload were twice as likely to approve of pinching or slapping women in labour.

“Half of the nurses surveyed (versus 14 percent of medical officers) reported providing care above or beneath their dignity, and client mistreatment at their hospital, about half (49 percent) agreed that “sometimes you have to yell at a woman in labor,” and a third (30 percent) agreed that pinching or slapping a laboring woman can make her push harder,” the study states.

Health and Social Services Minister Dr Bernard Haufulku has opened ten one-roomed community-based antiretroviral therapy (ART) clinics built at a total cost of N$2.3 million. Five of the clinics were built in some of the remote areas of Oshana region, while the other five were built in Oshana region on land donated by the headmen of the beneficiary villages.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Namibia through the American President’s Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) provided the funds needed to build the structures, which consist of a prefabricated one-room clinic and a pit-latrine.

President’s Emergency Plan for Aids Relief and client perspectives on maternity care in Namibia: results from two cross-sectional studies, by Jennifer Wesson Ndapeva Hanumainine, Claire Viadro, Martha Carlough, Pamuel Mupiya and Pearl Kulimugog made public online on 5 September 2018 that involved medical officers, matrons, and enrolled nurses working in Namibia’s 35 district and referral hospitals shows that 49 percent of public health care workers admitted to yelling at a woman in labour.

Most participants in the health worker study were experienced maternity care nurses. One-third (31 percent) of survey respondents reported witnessing or knowing patient mistreatment at their hospital, about half (49 percent) agreed that “sometimes you have to yell at a woman in labor,” and a third (30 percent) agreed that pinching or slapping a laboring woman can make her push harder,” the study states.

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Health minister Bernard Haufulku flanked by American ambassador Lisa Johnson(l), and Health Permanent Secretary Ben Nangombe(r)