

Assessment of the causes and effects of medical malpractice litigation on the effective performance of health workers in Mulago hospital Uganda

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ABSTRACT:

The study was set to find out the causes and the effect of medical malpractice litigation on the health workers performance in Uganda. The respondents of the study were doctors, lawyers, members Uganda Health user/consumer organization and hospital administrator. The study was carried out after observation that medical litigation was on increased and yet there was no data on the causes and the likely effects in Uganda environment. The results of the study would then help policy makers and hospital heads on how to control the litigation and halt the consequences.

The study used both exploratory and explanatory research design, with both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The qualitative method included in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, while quantitative data were collected by the use of structured questionnaires. Questionnaires were used to get information from doctors, while interview were conducted for lawyers and hospital administrator. Focus group discussion was used to get information from members of Uganda health user's organization.

Several factors were identified as the causes of medical malpractice litigation and these included the patient awareness of their medical rights, high socioeconomic class patients, poor communication and poor attitudes of workers. The study also discovered that contributory factors to litigation such as medical challenges, poor ethical conduct and prevalent medical malpractices were common at work places. Suing of doctors and other health workers has negative effects on communication and code of health care but improves access, quality care, equity and record keeping.

The study findings also showed that performance of doctors depend on several factors some personal and others beyond. The hospital factors and the social cultural environment were also found to have impact on the way doctors perform. It is therefore recommended that hospital system factors, such as equipment, communication channels, and proper supervision should be put in place to enhance health care performance and hence reduced

litigation. It was recommended that doctors and other health workers in medical schools should be exposed to communication skills training and customer care relations to improve on their interaction with patients.