

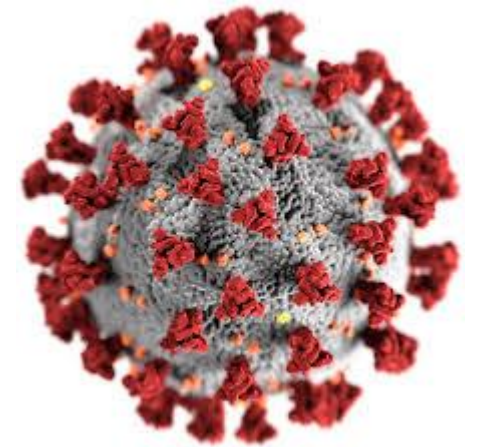


FOSTERING ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES ON COVID-19 CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN UGANDA: A CASE OF ENTEBBE REGIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL

Beatrice Oling Adong
Principal Assistant Secretary
Office of the President/MLHUD/Jinja Mzo
27th November, 2024 @ Speke Resort Munyonyo.

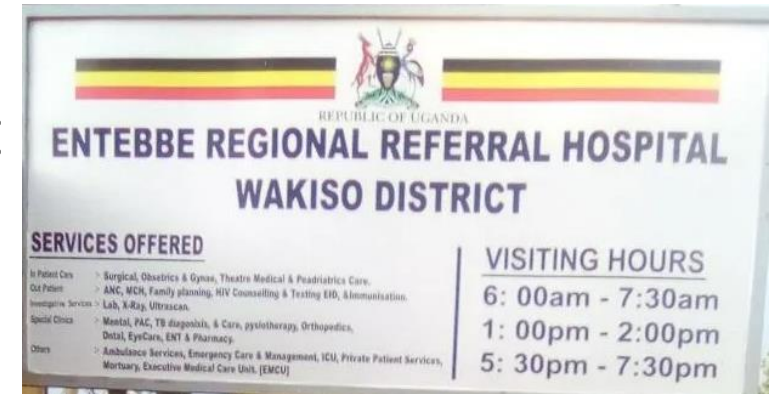
Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the operations of health institutions and medical practitioners worldwide, with its effects particularly severe in developing economies such as Uganda. Unlike previous health crises, COVID-19 introduced unprecedented challenges due to its rapid spread, high infection rates, and global reach, requiring hospitals and healthcare systems to adapt quickly. The pandemic disrupted routine healthcare services and forced hospitals to respond under extreme pressure, making it difficult to balance regular care with the demands of COVID-19 treatment.



Background cont...

- Healthcare institutions, including Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital, faced significant threats and struggled to cope with the overwhelming influx of patients, resource shortages, and the need for swift, accurate decision-making. The management of such crises placed immense pressure on hospital leadership, highlighting the critical importance of effective administrative strategies in mitigating the effects of the pandemic.



Background cont...

- This study focused on investigating the administrative experiences and best practices in COVID-19 crisis management at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital. By examining how the hospital administration responded to the crisis, the study aimed to uncover strategies that were effective in managing the pandemic and provide recommendations for improving crisis management in future health emergencies.



Introduction

- This study investigated the impact of administrative experiences and best practices on COVID-19 crisis management at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital. In particular, it analyzed the roles of health administration, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and planning in effectively managing the pandemic. The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis exposed vulnerabilities within healthcare systems globally, and hospitals in developing economies, such as Uganda, were especially affected.



Introduction cont...

- Understanding how administrative practices influenced the hospital's ability to respond to the pandemic is crucial for enhancing future crisis preparedness. By employing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, the study aimed to identify the key factors that contributed to successful crisis management at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital. The focus on health administration, CSR, and planning provided a comprehensive view of the hospital's internal and external strategies during the crisis.



Introduction cont...

- The study's findings are intended to offer practical insights and recommendations for optimizing administrative practices and improving hospital readiness for future health emergencies. The lessons learned from Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital's experience could serve as a model for other healthcare institutions facing similar challenges.



Objectives

The study aimed to:

- **Analyze** the impact of health administration on the hospital's effectiveness in managing the COVID-19 crisis focusing on leadership and resource management.
- **Assess** the influence of corporate social responsibility in supporting crisis response efforts through external partnerships and community engagement.
- **Examine** the role of planning in ensuring effective crisis management, particularly in terms of preparedness and adaptive strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Research Questions

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

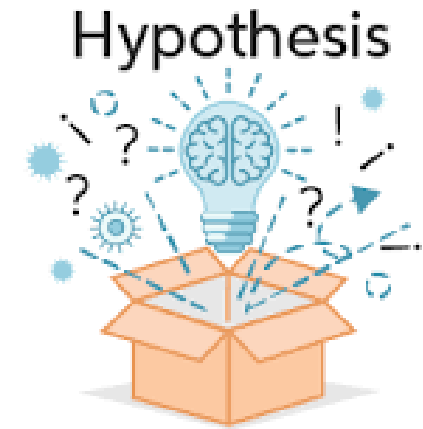
- **What** is the impact of health administration on COVID-19 crisis management?
- **How** does corporate social responsibility influence crisis response?
- **What** role does planning play in ensuring effective COVID-19 crisis management?



Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

- **H₀₁**: There is no significant impact of health administration on crisis management at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital.
- **H₀₂**: There is no significant impact of corporate social responsibility on crisis management at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital.
- **H₀₃**: There is no significant impact of planning on crisis management at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital.



1.0 Resource Allocation and Management	Findings	Best practice
<h2 data-bbox="12 811 343 968">1.1 Scaling Capacity</h2>	<p data-bbox="644 265 1684 654">The results revealed that one of the immediate challenges Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital faced during the COVID-19 crisis was a significant surge in patient numbers, particularly in the Intensive Care Units (ICUs)/HDUs. Despite this, the hospital managed the crisis effectively by rapidly expanding its capacity.</p> <p data-bbox="644 779 1684 1428">For instance, Entebbe Regional Hospital repurposed existing spaces into ICUs to accommodate critically ill patients and for staff accommodation. Additionally, the hospital utilized field hospitals to manage the overflow, other essential services were referred to lower health facilities. and shifted essential services to another campus (Grade A), ensuring that patients received timely care despite the overwhelming demand. Zones were created to separate Patients: Triage Zone, Presumptive cases, Suspect cases. And confirmed cases. This swift response demonstrated the hospital's adaptability</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 265 2532 594">Implementing flexible space utilization strategies, such as converting non-clinical areas into patient care units and setting up temporary field hospitals, can effectively manage surges in patient numbers.</p> <p data-bbox="1709 722 2532 939">These approaches allow healthcare facilities to quickly adapt to increased demand and ensure that adequate care is provided during emergencies.</p>

1.2 Equipment and Supplies Management

Findings

The availability of essential equipment—such as ventilators, personal protective equipment (PPE), and testing kits—was a critical factor in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital was relatively better positioned to meet the demand for these resources due to its robust supply chains and access to centralized government resources. Ministry Of Health provided Oxygen Mask with Tubing and Connector, Disposable (Adult), Oxygen Mask with Tubing and Connector, Disposable (Adult), Oxygen Cylinder with Gas, Large (6.8cbm, 45 L) De-Ionized Water 20 Ltr, Oxygen Mask, Non-Rebreathing, Paediatric Size with Accessories Face Mask, Size 3-4 For Adults/ Large Chn.Ambu among others. In contrast, some other hospitals in Uganda faced significant challenges, particularly with PPE shortages,

Best practice

Establishing a centralized system for monitoring and distributing critical supplies, along with maintaining emergency stockpiles, can ensure that hospitals are adequately equipped during health crises.

This approach helps to streamline resource allocation, prevent shortages, and ensure timely access to essential equipment and materials.

2.0 Corporate Social Responsibility	Findings	Best practice
	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic presented unique challenges, but it also underscored the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility as a means for government, NGOs and individuals to demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of Entebbe Staff and the communities around.</p> <p>The study discovered that donations played a critical role in supporting Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital. Whereas, it was true that Hospitals and clinics experienced overwhelming demand, Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital received donations that assisted supply essential items such as personal protective equipment, ventilators, and medicines. Contributions from Ministry of Health, Mildmay Uganda, Infectious Diseases Institute, MRC / UVRI and LSHTM Uganda, World Health Organization, Oxygen from Roofings (U) LTD, Hon. Ndugu Ruhakana Rugunda's National CSR Drive, and individuals helped fill critical gaps in</p>	<p>Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital was in dire need of specific items, such as personal protective equipment, sanitizers, medical supplies, food, and clothing. In-kind donations helped fill these gaps.</p> <p>However, before sending in-kind donations, they ensured to coordinate with the recipient organization (Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital).</p>

3.0 Staff Management and Support	Findings	Best practice
<p>3.1 Workforce Flexibility:</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a rapid adaptation of the workforce at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital to handle the increased demand for care. Key measures included:</p> <p>Reassigning Staff: Shifting staff from elective procedures to focus on COVID-19 care.</p> <p>Cross-Training: Training employees to take on critical care roles.</p> <p>Recruiting Contract Staff (MOH): Bringing in additional personnel to support the overwhelmed workforce.</p> <p>Utilizing Volunteers: Effectively incorporating volunteer healthcare workers to bolster the hospital's staffing capacity.</p> <p>The UPDF and Uganda Police Leadership set up teams: Medical, Support, Administrative, welfare, Ambulance, and each had a team leader.</p>	<p>Developing a flexible workforce strategy, which includes cross-training programs and maintaining a reserve of temporary or volunteer staff, will enable Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital to swiftly adapt to changing needs during a crisis.</p> <p>This approach ensures that the hospital can efficiently respond to surges in demand and other emergency situations.</p>

	Findings	Best practice
<h3>3.2 Protecting Healthcare Workers</h3>	<p>The results highlighted that ensuring the safety and well-being of healthcare workers was a top priority for Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital. Key measures included:</p> <p>Strict Infection Prevention and Control Protocols: Implementing rigorous standards to protect staff from infection.</p> <p>Adequate PPE Supply: Ensuring that healthcare workers had access to necessary protective equipment.</p> <p>Mental Health Support: Providing psychological support to help staff cope with the stress and demands of the pandemic.</p> <p>These efforts were successful in maintaining a healthy and motivated workforce, which was crucial for effective crisis management.</p>	<p>Comprehensive Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) protocols, combined with regular mental health support and training, are essential for protecting healthcare workers and ensuring continuity of care.</p> <p>These measures help maintain a safe and resilient workforce, crucial for effective response during health crises.</p>

4.0 Patient Care and Clinical Management	Findings	Best practice
<p>4.1 Triage and Prioritizing Care</p>	<p>The results indicated that effective triage systems were essential in managing the large influx of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital implemented clear triage protocols, allowing them to prioritize care for the most critical patients and achieve better outcomes. For example, the hospital developed triage criteria based on patient age and comorbidities to allocate limited ICU resources effectively. This systematic approach helped ensure that the most severe cases received timely and appropriate care.</p>	<p>Developing and implementing robust triage protocols ensures that resources are allocated effectively, thereby maximizing the chances of survival for the most critical patients.</p> <p>This systematic approach helps manage patient flow and optimize the use of limited medical resources during emergencies.</p>

5.0 Infection Prevention and Control	Findings	Best practice
<p>5.1 Isolation and Quarantine Protocols</p>	<p>The results demonstrated that strict isolation and quarantine protocols were crucial in preventing the spread of COVID-19 within hospitals. Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital effectively managed outbreaks by:</p> <p>Establishing Dedicated COVID-19 Wards: Creating specific areas for the treatment of COVID-19 patients to minimize the risk of transmission to other patients and staff.</p> <p>Implementing Strict Visitor Policies: Restricting access to the hospital to control potential sources of infection.</p> <p>Control of staff Movement.</p> <p>These measures significantly contributed to controlling the spread of the virus and maintaining a safer environment within the hospital.</p>	<p>Implementing dedicated facilities for infectious diseases, along with strict visitor and staff movement protocols, is crucial for preventing nosocomial infections during a pandemic.</p> <p>These measures help contain the spread of the virus within the hospital, protecting both patients and healthcare workers</p>

	Findings	Best practice
<h2 data-bbox="12 706 726 835">5.2 Hygiene and Sanitation Practices</h2>	<p data-bbox="861 107 1668 442">The results indicated that enhanced hygiene and sanitation practices were critical in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital effectively maintained a safer environment by:</p> <p data-bbox="861 506 1668 664">Increasing Cleaning Frequency: Especially in high-touch areas, to minimize the risk of virus transmission.</p> <p data-bbox="861 678 1668 842">Using Disinfectants: Applying effective cleaning agents to surfaces and equipment.</p> <p data-bbox="861 906 1668 1185">These practices were essential in creating a safer environment for both patients and staff, contributing significantly to controlling the spread of the virus within the hospital.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 107 2509 385">Regular and thorough sanitation of hospital facilities, combined with the use of advanced disinfection technologies, is essential for maintaining a safe environment during a health crisis.</p> <p data-bbox="1709 506 2509 728">These measures help prevent the spread of infections and ensure a cleaner, safer space for both patients and healthcare workers.</p>

6.0 Communication and Information Management	Findings	Best practice
<p>6.1 Internal Communication</p>	<p>The results highlighted that clear and consistent internal communication was crucial for managing the rapidly evolving situation during the pandemic. Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital effectively maintained regular communication with staff through:</p> <p>Daily Briefings: Providing updates and information on the current situation and protocols.</p> <p>Regular Updates: Keeping staff informed about changes and developments.</p> <p>Clear Guidelines: Offering precise instructions on procedures and roles.</p> <p>Top management meetings were held to make decisions and solve problems: treatment protocols, logistics, referrals, collaboration and networking, motivations of health workers, critically ill patients. Physical meetings were held while wearing masks.</p>	<p>Establishing a centralized communication system within hospitals ensures that all staff are informed and can respond effectively to changes during a crisis.</p> <p>This approach helps maintain clarity, streamline coordination, and enhance the overall efficiency of the hospital's response efforts.</p>

	Findings	Best practice
<h2 data-bbox="25 756 713 813">6.2 Public Communication</h2>	<p data-bbox="866 157 1656 714">Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital played a crucial role in communicating with the public by providing information on safety measures and addressing concerns about the pandemic. Effective public communication helped manage patient expectations and reduce panic, contributing to a more informed and calm community response during the crisis.</p>	<p data-bbox="1707 157 2522 485">Engaging in proactive public communication, including the use of social media and collaboration with local media, is essential for managing public expectations and reducing misinformation during a crisis.</p> <p data-bbox="1707 614 2522 885">This approach ensures that accurate information is disseminated widely, helping to keep the public informed and mitigate the spread of false or misleading information.</p>

7.0 Lessons Learned and Future Preparedness	Findings	Best practice
<p>7.1 Continuous Learning and Adaptation</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of continuous learning and adaptation. Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital exemplified this by regularly reviewing and updating its protocols based on new information and shared experiences. This dynamic approach contributed to its success in managing the crisis more effectively, demonstrating the value of flexibility and ongoing improvement in response strategies</p>	<p>Establishing a system for continuous learning and adaptation, including regular review of protocols and incorporation of the latest research, ensures that hospitals can respond effectively to evolving situations.</p> <p>This approach enables healthcare facilities to stay current with best practices and make informed adjustments to their response strategies.</p>

	Findings	Best practice
<h2 data-bbox="12 699 764 842">7.2 Long-Term Preparedness Planning.</h2>	<p data-bbox="866 114 1656 271">The pandemic underscored the need for long-term preparedness planning in hospitals. This includes:</p> <p data-bbox="866 342 1656 499">Stockpiling Essential Supplies: Ensuring that critical resources are available during emergencies.</p> <p data-bbox="866 514 1656 728">Developing Surge Capacity Plans: Creating strategies to expand hospital capacity quickly in response to sudden increases in patient numbers.</p> <p data-bbox="866 742 1656 1013">Maintaining Flexible Workforce Strategies: Implementing cross-training programs and maintaining a reserve of temporary or volunteer staff to adapt to changing demands.</p> <p data-bbox="866 1085 1656 1299">These measures may help hospitals (including Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital) enhance their readiness and resilience for future crises</p>	<p data-bbox="1707 114 2497 499">Developing and maintaining comprehensive preparedness plans, which include stockpiling essential supplies, establishing surge capacity, and implementing flexible workforce strategies, is essential for hospitals to effectively manage future health crises.</p> <p data-bbox="1707 685 2497 842">These measures ensure that healthcare facilities are well-equipped to handle sudden and large-scale emergencies</p>

Recommendations

It was recommended that

- The administration of Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital further enhance crisis management planning,
- Rapid decision-making,
- Communication,
- Resource allocation,
- Problem-solving capacities,
- **Post-crisis evaluation and,**
- **Emotional intelligence of staff.**

These improvements could be achieved through targeted training and education in the areas identified.



Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has offered valuable insights into hospital crisis management, highlighting the critical importance of preparedness, flexibility, and clear communication. By adopting the best practices outlined in this report, hospitals can significantly improve their response capabilities for future pandemics and other health crises. Key strategies include:

- **Investing in Scalable Infrastructure:** Enhancing the ability to expand capacity rapidly in response to surges.
- **Robust Infection Prevention and Control Measures:** Implementing effective protocols to safeguard both patients and staff.
- **Comprehensive Staff Support Systems:** Providing ongoing training, mental health support, and flexible workforce strategies.

These measures will be crucial for building the resilience of hospital systems and ensuring effective management of future challenges.





AKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

**Patients and Staff of Entebbe
Regional Referral Hospital.**

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING