

Healthcare challenges in developing nations



Objective of this paper is to outline briefly the difference between healthcare in developing and developed nations and the challenges developing nations face in providing adequate healthcare to their people.

Health Care in developed and developing Countries

Health care is defined as the field concerned with the restoration of human life which is holistic include body and mind of the individual, the medical dictionary define health care as “ The prevention, treatment and management of illness and the preservation of mental and physical well-being through service offered by the medial and allied health professions” ¹

Developing nation are nations which are considered to be industrialized and developing countries are countries considered to be underdeveloped or third world countries whose citizen depend solely on agricultural work and trying to improve the social and economic life of its citizens and these countries lack healthcare infrastructures to address the health needs of their people.

A country can be considered either developed or developing based on the basis of many other indicators such as “ economics, per capita income, industrialization, literacy rate, living standard.” ² According to Kofi Annan “ a developed country is one that allows all its citizens to enjoy a free and healthy life in a safe environment” ² . Differencebetwwen. info ² has outlined several generalized characteristics between developed and developing nations, for the developing nation this includes high level of industrial development, post-industrial economics, high education level, better infrastructures, good health care, high human development index (HDI) increased life expectancy. While developing countries have the following

characteristics lower education rate, high levels of birth rates, death rates and high infant mortality rates, poor infrastructure, weak governments and poor access to health care.

Differences between healthcare in developing and developed nations

Health care differ from developing and developing nations and this mostly depends on the economic and political stability of each nations, that is why even in countries called developed or developing may be different form nations. WHO has identified indicators that used to measure the discrepancies in health such as “ health of the population, fair financial contributions, and responsiveness of the system, preventable deaths, and affordability?” (Boundless. com) ³ .

Challenges faced by developing nations to provide adequate healthcare to its people

Developing countries face many challenges as they provide healthcare service this includes cost, social, cultural, political and economic conditions.

- Cost and quality outcome of services developing countries struggle on how to balance between service offered and the quality of services offered to its population, reducing health care cost and improving quality of outcomes is a challenge ⁴ . Many developing nations although has healthcare budget allocated for healthcare but the quality of the service offered may be affected because the budgets many not be enough to caterer for the current shift of diseases from infectious to chronic disease.

- Human resource many developing countries face shortage of medical personnel such as doctors and other health care professionals, the available few human resources lack adequate training, poor motivation that has resulted into brain drain and the resources of doctors to patients in most developing countries is
- Aging population. Developing countries aging population in coming decades is anticipated to increase more especially the age group 65 years and above to 690 million by 2030 (Toshiko Kaneda) ⁵
- Access to health care in developing countries has been identified as a challenges this can include dimension such as the availability of service, affordability and acceptability. Many communities in developing countries many have constrains in accessing service this can be linked to distance from the community to the health facility, lack of money for transport and to pay for paying the service, attitude of health workers affected people's access of the service.
- According to China Watch developing countries public health sector is faced by four major challenges “ the transformation of epidemiology, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the emergence of new diseases, and high sanitation imbalances among countries” ⁶ These challenges expose people in developing countries into poverty as the cost of treatment associated with this conditions is high and most people who may be infected are the bread winners as they become sick productivity is reduced and the work force in the community is affected.

- Rise in chronic diseases the rates of chronic disease continue to increase this pose a great danger to the inadequate health care systems in most developing countries with limited finance, human resource and infrastructure to deal with this shift of disease burden.
- Inequality in health care health care in developing countries can be seen on different levels of “ social stratification including socioeconomic, political, ethnic, and cultural”(Dr Christopher October 2009) ⁷
- Infrastructure
- Resources many developing countries have limited resources to fund the health care system, more than 50% of Africa population lack access to health care (Dan. November 2 2006) ⁸ . Most funding for health in developing countries is out-of-pocket for example in Kenya 52% of health care financial is out-of-pocket (Dan 2006).
- Perception of health care in most developing countries staff working in the health care facilities are unhappy due to poor motivation and many clients who seek care may view some health care providers as unqualified, these results in poor service provision and affects patients access to health care (Lowell et al June 2010).
- Developing

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