

Editorial

Health is wealth and a healthy population contributes greatly towards the socio-economic development of a nation. This publication, though little as it may appear, is a pathway towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) which attempts to increase awareness about the basic principles of health.

The Editorial Team therefore wishes to express deep appreciation to those who, in diverse ways, contributed towards the production of this Newsletter.

We welcome your comments and observations and promise to reflect them in our next edition. Our email address is: KAMBIA_NEWS_LETTER@yahoo.com

Proposed Articles for Volume 5

- ✂ The Ghana Study Tour Experience
- ✂ Vital Health Statistics
- ✂ The H1N1 Immunization Campaign
- ✂ Mother and Child Health Week
- ✂ Health Message from the District Health Management Team (DHMT)

FEATURING THE PORTERS

Perhaps a set of workers to contact at any establishment for reliable information is the porters. They are the first to arrive and last to leave. They will tell you what happened before the General Manager arrived or after everyone had left. In most cases, these workers do the dirty jobs like cleaning the toilets, scrubbing the floors and trimming the grass to keep the environment tidy. As rewards, they are the least paid and most often threatened with termination of services.

Being a porter requires lots of endurance as it is not an easy task, but have you ever tried to wander about the job of a porter at a Government Hospital? In this context, porters are people whose job is to move patients from one place to another in a hospital. Nonetheless, being a porter at a Hospital means more than that as it is a very challenging job which many people do not opt for.

At Kambia Government Hospital, moving patients from one place to another is just the beginning of a porter's job and the rest involves physical fitness to

overcome it. Cleaning of wards, brushing the compound and tidying up the environment are within the job description of a porter at a hospital. If porters at hospital go on strike, the entire system will collapse and if the grass could be trimmed well, their cutlasses should be sharp. Boots protect workers from broken bottles, sharp blades and even snakes. Motivation is what the porters need and the environment will be clean.



Porters at work



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KAMBIA HEALTH NEWS LETTER

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KAMBIA HEALTH DAY AND 'MAMI EN PIKIN WELL BODI WEEK' CELEBRATIONS

The Kambia District Health Management Team (DHMT) in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other stakeholders, on Thursday 27th May 2010, celebrated the Kambia Health Day.



Participants marching on Kambia Health Day

Participants in T-Shirts with Project Logo reading: "Kambia Health Day", "Mami En Pikin Well Bodi Week" and "Well Bodi Na Gentr", marched towards the Government Hospital.

The Health Day motivates the PHU staff about the importance of health services they render to their communities. The Theme focuses on prevention of Polio and Malaria, Free Health Care and 6 months exclusive breast feeding. During the occasion, the MoHS representative made a statement followed by District Council Chairman, Paramount Chief, the DMO, representatives of JICA, WHO and NGOs.

Chairman S.S.A. Sankoh, advised his people to attend functions so that they could inform their people. Mr. J. Seppeh, from the Malaria Control Programme, representing the MoHS, appealed to the

people of Kambia to embrace JICA for its unique initiative which is not found in other districts. Ms. A. Tatsuta, JICA representative, said that the President's agenda for change is to reduce the high child and maternal mortality and morbidity in the country and that the development of health management system and human capacity building are vital for the social and economic growth of the country.



Water and Environmental Health Booth demonstrating hand washing with soap

Dr. F. Jayah, the DMO, endorsed the efforts of JICA and other stakeholders who have made the celebration a success.

The occasion was climaxed by the distribution of awards to the 7 Best PHUs in the district.



Comedians demonstrating the correct use of the Mosquito Net

THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT AT KAMBIA GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL



Dr. Sheriff Chernor Jalloh, Medical Superintendent, Kambia Government Hospital

Dr. S. C. Jalloh is the Medical Superintendent at the Kambia Government Hospital. He hailed from a humble background in Delken, Bonthe District, southern Sierra Leone and had his secondary education at Christ the King College (CKC), Bo.

Dr. S.C. Jalloh studied medicine in Ukraine at the Lugansk State Medical University and graduated in 1998. He did his internship at Connaught and the PCMH Children's Hospital in Freetown in 1999. He worked at the Satellite Hospital at Kingharman Road in Freetown in 2001 and then at the Government Hospital in Kenema in 2002. He was appointed Medical Superintendent at the Kambia Government Hospital in 2010 where he is working to date.

Dr. S.C. Jalloh has ensured free of cost Caesarian operation at the hospital and also treatment for children under-five years, among other achievements.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE FREE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

His Excellency's agenda for change focusing on the need to address the unacceptably high child and maternal mortality and morbidity in Sierra Leone is a vital issue for all to embrace. The introduction of Free Health Care Services for pregnant and lactating women up to two years and children less than five years of age is an attempt to enhance the achievement of this goal.

The Civil Society Movement therefore ensures the safe delivery of drugs meant for the target beneficiaries. Their role in the free health care services entails mainly monitoring and sensitization.

In the area of monitoring, they have two trained staff attached at the Kambia Government Hospital who monitor the administration of these drugs to the target population. They also work independently making sure that the hospital environment is always tidy and that the vehicle provided for the free health care services is appropriately used.

In the area of sensitization, the Civil Society Movement informs the public about the free health care services introduced by the government as many communities are not aware of this policy.



Civil Society Movement at Kambia



Free Health Care drugs for distribution

THE REHABILITATION OF KONTA PHU

Konta is in Bramaia Chiefdom in Kambia district and is 48 miles from Kambia town. Initially, Action Aid operated a Mobile Clinic there and later, a PHU was built but was vandalized during the war.

After the war, the International Medical Core (IMC) renovated the PHU but on 26th June 2007, it was damaged by storm. Since then, the PHU was operated in a private house.

The DHMT asked support from JICA Health Project to rehabilitate the PHU and both embarked on the rehabilitation in December 2009. It was completed and handed over on the 19th March 2010.

Konta PHU now has a Solar Refrigerator for vaccines, an incinerator, well, Latrine, motorbike and a staff quarter under construction by the community itself.



Konta PHU before rehabilitation



The newly refurbished Konta PHU



Handing over ceremony

During the handing over ceremony on 19th March 2010, Dr. F. Jayah, the DMO, commended JICA for their support and also congratulated the Konta Community for their participation in the rehabilitation process.

Speaking on behalf of JICA, Mrs. K. Koroma said that JICA's aim is not only to construct beautiful structures but to improve the health status of the communities.

Councilor S.I. Kamara, the District Council representative, lauded JICA for supporting the development strides of the council.

Ya Alimamy, women's leader, advised her colleagues to make good use of the PHU.



A New Incinerator at Konta PHU

REHABILITATION OF HOSPITAL INCINERATOR

Waste management is the collection, transport, segregation, processing, disposal and monitoring of waste materials. Incineration is a disposal method that involves combustion of waste materials.

Sometimes ago, Medicine Sans Frontier (MSF) erected an incinerator for Kambia Hospital but was out of use for a long time.

The DHMT and JICA invited the Regional Medical Waste Management Officer from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) to advise on the construction of an incinerator of national standard. This was rehabilitated by JICA in collaboration with DHMT and at the same time, porters, cleaners, labourers and some ward attendants were trained on waste disposal management.



Training of Porters on the use of the incinerator

Warning to the General Public:

- i. The vicinity of the incinerator is prohibited to everyone
- ii. Keep off from the premises especially during the burning of wastes as the fumes could be dangerous to your health.
- iii. Eating within the vicinity of the incinerator is prohibited
- iv. No one is allowed to take or play with any box or container as they might be contaminated with dangerous chemicals.



Burning of waste in the incinerator

SYNCHRONISED POLIO CAMPAIGN ROUND 4

Polio is a childhood disease and one of the most dreadful in the sub-region and measures to eradicate it have become a priority of most heads of states. The campaign is undertaken at the same time in the entire sub-region of West Africa and each round lasts for four days.

During round one (1), it was discovered that the disease was present in Kukuna, Kambia District, close to the border with Guinea. At the time of these rounds, Stakeholders explain to the people the essence of taking the vaccine.

How is Polio Contracted?

The virus that causes polio exists in human stool and the disease is transmitted in the following ways:

- i. A child eating his own stool that is infested by the virus
- ii. A healthy child eating the stool of an infected child
- iii. Eating of food that is contaminated by the polio virus
- iv. Drinking water from a contaminated source of polio virus.

How to Prevent Polio

- i. The best option is through immunization.
- ii. Immunizing your child from 0-59 months against polio which is free of charge
- iii. Cleaning up your child's stool immediately he passes it out
- iv. Cautioning your child against playing with rubbish
- v. Teaching your child to wash hands after using the toilet and before eating.
- vi. Keeping the surrounding clean

PLEASE BE INFORMED THAT POLIO CANNOT BE CURED BUT CAN BE PREVENTED.

FREE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

From vital health statistics, His Excellency the President observed that the rate of infant and maternal mortality in the country is unbelievably very high and needs urgent attention. To address this issue, the government has introduced a free health care policy as an agenda for change in reducing the mortality rate among infants and maternal sector of the country's population.

What is Free Health Care Service?

It is a policy implemented by the government to provide free medication for a target population in the country.

Who are the Target Population for the Free Health Care Service?

- i. Pregnant women
- ii. Lactating mothers up to two years
- iii. Children below five years of age

Anyone outside this range is required to pay for any treatment at the hospital.



A consignment of drugs for the Free Health Care Services

Voices of the PHU staff about the Free Health Care Services

- i. Influx of patients at the PHUs
- ii. Reduction in infant and maternal mortality
- iii. Heavy workload because of high turn outs
- iv. Very few emergency cases as both pregnant and lactating women now rush to the PHUs the moment they observe health problems. Before the Free Health Care Services, pregnant and

lactating women do wait at home till their conditions or children's conditions were very critical before rushing to the hospital

Voices of the patients about the Free Health Care Services

i. Lactating mother from Kambia town

With the Free Health Care Services, I stopped treating my daughter with n a t i v e medicines. I often rush with her to the hospital when she is ill because I do not have to pay for treatment.

ii. Mother of a two-year old boy; Malnourishment case (Admitted)

I have been receiving free treatment and my son and I are fed three times a day because of the Free Health Care Services. I am very grateful for this initiative and hope it will continue.

iii. Pregnant woman from Koya.

Now that I do not have to pay for treatments, the little money I have will now be used for other purposes



Free Health Care drugs on shelves

The Way Forward

- The Government should make available more essential drugs at the PHUs as there are more target populations than the drugs provided
- More sensitization on the Free Health Care Services is needed as some people still do not know who the target populations are for the Free Health Care Service
- Government should recruit more staff to suit the increasing workload.

HEALTH TALK FROM DISTRICT HEALTH MANAGEMENT TEAM (DHMT)

Health Message for Pregnant and Lactating Women

1. Pregnant Women

The aim of every pregnant woman is to **deliver safely**. To ensure this, the following could help:



Pregnant women at PHU waiting for treatment

Things to eat/take

- i. Nutritious foods like: eggs, fish, beans, benny, liver, plantain, Palm oil, vegetables, fruits, pumpkin and other hard protein diets.
- ii. Drink clean and safe drinking water

Things not to eat/take

- i. Alcoholic drinks
- ii. Native herbs
- iii. Smoking of cigarettes

Things to do

- i. Backyard gardening as a mild form of exercise
- ii. Having sound sleep and adequate rest
- iii. Using breast wear to avoid breast engorgement (swelling) after delivery
- iv. Visiting the PHU for Ante-Natal Care (ANC) packages and general examination
- v. Delivering at PHU for clean and safe delivery

Things not to do

- i. Smoking cigarettes
- ii. Involving in vigorous exercise like fighting

2. Lactating Women



Lactating mothers at PHU with their babies waiting for treatment

Things to eat/take

- i. Continue to eat what they used to eat during pregnancy
- ii. More food that is rich in iron and protein for energy, blood and for healthy growth of babies

Things not to eat/take

Alcoholic drinks

Things to do

- i. Pay regular monthly visit to PHU for Growth Monitoring & Promotion (GMP) and taking of vaccination for all EPI Killer Diseases like TB, Diphtheria, Yellow Fever, Measles, Hepatitis B and Homophiles Influenzas Type B (HIB), Poliomyelitis and Whooping Cough.
- ii. Practice Family Planning to space your children for the health of the mother
- iii. Practice 6 months exclusive breast feeding
- iv. Start complementary feeding at 7 months
- v. Use clean napkins on your babies
- vi. Use clean cups and spoons to feed babies
- vii. Clean up the nipple before breast feeding your child
- viii. Clean up your child immediately he passes out stool
- ix. Hand washing with soap and water before feeding babies
- x. Dry napkins /clothes on lines

Things not to do

- i. Do not leave your breast exposed while sleeping to avoid breast milk dropping into the ears of your baby (this may cause ear infection)
- ii. Hand feeding of babies
- iii. Drying napkins/clothes on the ground



A Nurse advising Lactating Women on things to do and not to do

PHU HEALTH COMMITTEE



One of the Workshops/Study Tours for PHU Health Committee

A Peripheral Health Unit (PHU) Health Committee is a body of community people that oversees the smooth running of the PHU. It exists in every PHU.

Who serves on the PHU Health Committee?

Membership of the PHU Health Committee is open to:

- i. Active members in the community
- ii Those who can give up their time and energy to the community
- iii Chiefs, TBAs, opinion/women leaders, influential youth



A Session of PHU Health Committee

Responsibilities of PHU Health Committee

- i. Auditing the affairs of the PHU
- ii. Supervising the operations of the PHU
- iii. Creating effective links between PHU staff and the community
- iv. Ensuring enabling working environment at the PHU
- v. Sensitizing the community on health related issues
- vi. Overseeing the welfare of the people in the community
- vii. Ensuring the availability of essential drugs at the PHU
- viii. Making sure that the PHU is clean



Formation of PHU Health Committee



Deliberations on PHU Health Committee