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INTRODUCTION

The use of telehealth based audiological services (ABR) offered within a mobile van can improve early detection and intervention services for infants with hearing loss.

ABR services can be used for both screening and diagnostic objective hearing testing in the paediatric population who are unable to be tested by conventional hearing testing.

Mobile audiological services ensures that infants receive hearing healthcare services within close proximity of their homes. However, understanding caregiver perceptions is valuable to the sustainability of the program.

It is important that the end-users of services are consulted in terms of their perceptions and experience with the services. This would ensure compliance and sustainability of health programs.

Information of their experiences, opinions, suggestions and perceptions can be assimilated into the development and refinement of health service delivery programs.



RESULTS

- Thirty-eight (95%) of participants agreed that they were satisfied by the telehealth service being delivered in a mobile health van.
- Majority of participants (87.5%) strongly agreed that the receiving services in the mobile van was comfortable.
- Interestingly 15% (n = 6) of participants strongly agreed that using computer technology to receive health services was culturally inappropriate.
- All participants (100%, n = 40) agreed that they would access telehealth services again and 85% agreed that accessing mobile health services is preferred to face-to-face service at the local hospital reduced their overall travel costs.
- A total of 32 (80%) participants strongly agreed that they communicated clearly with the Audiologist through videoconferencing during testing.
- Regarding the quality of care, 77.5% agreed that the quality of care over telehealth model is the same as in-person visits.
- There was a strong association ($p = 0.04$) between the participants that earned below the minimum wage (R3500) and the choice to use telehealth in the future.

OBJECTIVES

The current study aimed to describe caregiver perceptions of the use of mobile telehealth-based ABR services offered to their infants when accessing care at PHC clinics within the Winterveldt district/region of Pretoria North, South Africa.

METHODS

After conducting synchronous telehealth ABR, a self-administered questionnaire comprising 15 questions in the form of a Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) was used to ascertain mothers' (n=40) experience from the service. The tool was translated into the local language.

CONCLUSION

A majority of the caregivers were satisfied with the mode of service delivery. Although the offering of telehealth-based services does come with some challenges such as the need to ensure that services are culturally appropriate, the model of care provides an opportunity to improve audiological services to rural and remote communities.

RÉFÉRENCES

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