

# **To Assess The Availability Of Counseling Services Offered And How It Influences Utilization Of Counseling Services By Healthcare Workers In Turkana County, Kenya.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Research indicates that Counseling services are very essential in any society. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to investigate on the factors influencing utilization of counseling services among healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were: to assess the availability of counseling services offered and how it influences utilization of counseling services by healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya, to establish the extent to which stigma influences utilization of counseling services, to determine the relationship between self-awareness and the influence on utilization of counseling services by healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya, to find out the extent to which attitude of counselling staff influences utilization of counseling services by healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya. The information obtained from the study benefitted the healthcare workers, communities, young scholars, government and non-governmental institutions actively involved in the implementation of counselling services. Questionnaires were used to collect research data from the selected healthcare workers in their respective health facilities and later validated by supervisors. The data collected from the study was analyzed using statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0. Descriptive statistics of the frequency distribution and percentages were the main statistical tool employed by researcher for analysis of the data. The study revealed high utilization of professional counselling services by healthcare workers as represented by 79% where low utilization of counselling services was indicated by 14.2% respectively. Those participants with undecided responses on availability and utilization of counselling services were 6%. On establishing the extent to which stigma influence utilization of counseling services, the study revealed that, 36% of the participants had positive attitude towards counselling services which clearly implied that, there is low level of stigma associated with utilization of counselling services portrayed by healthcare workers. Those who had negative attitude on counselling services recorded low count indicated by 8.7% with those who had undecided responses were 10.2%. On determining the relationship between self-awareness and the influence it has on utilization of counselling services, the study revealed that, 43.25% had adequate knowledge on the benefits associated with utilization of counselling services whereas 2.5% of the participants had inadequate knowledge on the benefits associated with utilization of counselling services. On investigating the extent to which attitude of staff providing counseling services influence utilization of counseling services, the study found out that, 41.15% of the participants had positive attitude directed to counselling staff whereas those with negative responses were 2.5% with undecided responses from the participants with a percentage of 12.67. The Ministry of Health, policy makers, government and non-governmental institutions should come up with standard policies that mandates incorporation of employee workplace counselling as an intervention that increases employee's resilience levels through adoption of positive and effective coping mechanisms.

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Healthcare providers inclusive of medical doctors, registered clinical officers, registered nurses, Psychiatric nurses, counselors/psychologists, medical social workers encounter numerous challenges at their individual and professional levels. As healthcare providers, they encounter emotional, psychological and physiological drain while interacting with the wounded and hurting patients. Healthcare professionals become emotionally drained in the process of serving patients suffering from various ailments. Some of these ailments are due to their incurability leave healthcare providers without hope while caring for the patients. Psychologically, healthcare professionals experience stress, burnout and even depression while caring for the

sick persons. Physiologically, healthcare professionals go through exhaustions and fatigue bearing in mind the chronic ailments of their patients.

In Kenya, the training curriculum for counselors is not standardized as each institution develops and adopts its own training module and content to offer to the desperate willing consumers. Currently most learning institutions have no qualified and fully based professional counselors to offer career and preventive counseling services to students.

### 1.2 Counselling Services

The review on utilization of counseling services focused more on availability of counseling services, stigma, self-awareness and attitude. Bauman & May (2019) demonstrated that stigma is not only held among people living in the society, but it pointed out that, there are instances when people try as much as possible to internalize some issues of concern and come up with their view and perception over something. For instance, people seeking counseling services have been labeled to be lacking morals and weak to handle their own challenges in life. This has contributed to the continued impact of social and public stigma directed to the services and people seeking such services too. This stigma associated with counseling can create a lot of feeling of guilt and inadequate about the concerns which brought the client to seek the services of a counselor. Furthermore, stigma is created across the complete counseling service offering by collective representations of the meaning of stigma in society, including shared values, belief systems and ideologies of the people.

### 1.3 Stigma

The stigma attached to receiving counseling services causes a number of barriers that prevent people, including mental health professionals, from seeking help. Healthcare workers are less likely to seek counseling services for themselves because of the widespread stigma associated with underutilization of counseling.

### 1.4 Self-awareness

Self-awareness entails knowledge and awareness of one's own personality or character based on his/her strength and weakness. Mental health services have for long time received stigmas which even exist in healthcare systems and among health care providers (Murnane, et al 2018). Stigma in such setting has created barriers for health care providers not to access available services despite the many challenges faced on the routine delivery of services to the people.

### 1.5 Attitude of the Counselling staff

The healthcare providers' perception and evaluation of the individual character of the provider including the physical appearance and dressing, proficient notoriety, accepted ethnicity, and sexual orientation, is impacted by the multitudinous encounters the client has blended over their lifetime. Such impressions regularly lead to changeless decisions and enthusiastic responses to other people, especially those apparent to be in places of power or force. There is minimal the provider can do to change clients' past encounters and how these encounters influence their connections to the healthcare providers and the experience of counseling (Thomas, 2019). The healthcare providers acknowledge that a few issues might be anticipated onto the counselor and make a twisted perspective on the communications among clients.

## II. Research Methodology

The study took place in Turkana County in four volume healthcare facilities in Turkana Central, Turkana West, Turkana South and Loima Constituency. These were government Health facilities established to serve the communities in Turkana County in terms of healthcare service provision. The study had a target of 60 healthcare workers. These facilities include: Lokichar Sub-County, Kakuma Sub-County Hospital, Lorugum Sub-County Hospital and Lodwar County and Referral Hospital. Using Morgan Table of determining sample size, the researcher took a sample size of 4 health facilities (Krejcie & Morgan 1970). The researcher determined the sample size by employing simple random sampling technique. Since each unit included in the sample had a pre-determined chance of being included in the sample, this technique of sampling was appropriate.

## III. Research Findings and Discussions

### 3.1 Availability of Counseling Services and how it influences utilization of counseling Services.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the availability of counselling services and how it influences utilization of counseling Services.**

Test item	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I voluntarily seek professional counseling services	3	4.8	50	80.6	3	4.8	4	4.8	1	1.6
I view counseling as part of the health facility program	12	19.4	34	54.8	2	3.2	7	11.3	5	8.1

I personally believe counseling solves healthcare workers pressing issues in life	26	41.9	20	32.3	4	6.5	5	8.1	5	8.1
I have a positive view about counseling	17	27.4	30	48.4	4	6.5	5	8.1	4	6.5
I am afraid to seek counseling services	17	27.4	31	50	5	8.1	3	4.8	4	6.5
I feel shy to seek counselling services	26	41.9	22	35.5	4	6.5	3	4.8	5	8.1
I need to seek counseling services only when I have financial constraints	11	17.7	40	64.5	1	1.6	3	4.8	5	8.1
I view counseling as a system to improve and increase healthcare professional's resilience levels	8	12.9	39	63.9	4	6.5	5	8.1	4	6.5
I perceive counseling as a service for people with mental disorders	23	37.1	19	30.6	4	6.5	6	9.7	8	12.9
I strongly believe that positive stress coping mechanisms come as a result of seeking counseling services	23	37.1	28	45.2	5	8.1	1	1.6	3	4.8

**Source: Field Data 2022**

The study found out that, the healthcare workers in Turkana County utilize professional counselling services as seen by higher scores for those who indicated agreed and strongly agreed were 50 (80.6%) and 3 (4.8%) respectively while 3 (4.8%) were undecided while low utility with those who strongly disagreed and disagreed represented by 1(1.6%) and 4(4.8%) respectively. High number of healthcare workers in Turkana County viewed counselling as part of the health facility program with 34(54.8%) and 12 (19.4%) indicating agreed and strongly agreed respectively. While 2(3.2%) were undecided while low count was observed to those who strongly disagreed and disagreed with 5(8.1%) and 7(11.3%) respectively. The health workers in Turkana believed that counselling solves healthcare workers pressing issues in life where 26 (41.9% strongly agreed and 20 (32.3% agreed while 4(6.5% of participants had undecided opinion while low count in disagreed and strongly disagreed represented by 5(8.1% and 5(8.1% respectively. There was a positive view about counseling where high responses were observed with 30(48.4% agreed while 17(27.4% strongly agreed undecided were 4(6.5%) while 5(8.1% and 4(6.5% was indicated by disagreed and strongly disagree respectively. Among the participants, there was indication that they were not afraid to seek for counseling services where 31(50% agreed and 17(27.4% strongly agreed while those who were undecided were 5(8.1% while disagreed 3(4.8% and 4(6.5% strongly disagreed respectively. To measure the shy among the healthcare workers in Turkana they indicated that they were not shy while seeking for counselling services where 26(41.9% strongly agreed and 22(35.5 % agreed respectively while the undecided 4(6.5% and those who disagreed 3(4.8% and 4(6.5% strongly disagreed respectively. The health workers didn't seek the counselling services while they had financial constraints where 11(17.7%) strongly agree while 40(64.5%) agree while 1(1.6% had undecided idea while 3(4.8%) disagreed and 5(8.1%) strongly disagreed due to financial constraints. High number of participants viewed counseling as a system to improve and increase healthcare professionals' resilience levels where 8(12.9%) and 39(63.9%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 4(6.5%) had undecided while 5(8.1%) disagreed and 4(6.5%) strongly disagreed. High number of health workers in Turkana indicated that they perceived counseling as a service for people with mental disorders where strongly agreed 23(37.1%) and 19(30.6%) agreed with this while 4(6.5%) had undecided idea while those who disagreed were 6(9.7%) similarly to those who strongly disagree were 8(12.9% respectively. On the assessment of positive stress coping mechanism occurs as a result of seeking counselling services, it indicated 23 (37.1%) strongly agreed and 28 (45.2%) agreed while 5 (8.1%) were undecided and lower count in disagreed 1 (1.6% and strongly disagree with 3 (4.8%) participants respectively.

**3.2 Inferential Statistics on the availability of counselling services and how it influences utilization of counseling Services.**

Chi square test was performed to test for correlation of counselling services and how it influenced utilization of counselling service and the following results were tabulated as per table 2 below.

**Table 2: Chi-square on the availability of counselling services and how it influences utilization of counseling Services**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.810 <sup>a</sup>	16	.073
Likelihood Ratio	27.000	16	.041
Linear-by-Linear Association	.052	1	.819
N of Valid Cases	60		

#### Source field Data (2022)

According to the results obtained in table 2 above the study found out that the correlation between the availability of counselling services and how it influences utilization of counseling services which was represented by 0.073 which is less than the chi square table value which is 26.30 at 16 degrees of freedom. This indicates that there was high influence on the availability of counselling services and how it influenced utilization of counselling services among the health care workers in Turkana County.

#### IV. Summary of findings

The study investigated on the factors influencing utilization of counseling services among healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to assess availability of counseling services and how it influence utilization of counseling services by healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya, to establish the extent to which stigma influences utilization of counseling services by healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya, to determine the relationship between self-awareness and the influence it has on utilization of counselling services by healthcare workers in Turkana County, Kenya and finally to find out the extent to which attitude of staff providing counseling services influence utilization of counseling services by healthcare workers in Turkana county, Kenya.

On assessing availability and utilization of counselling services among healthcare workers, the study indicated high utilization of counselling services represented by 40.0% as shown by 27% strongly agree and 52% agree respectively where low utilization of counselling services was indicated by 7.15% as shown by 7% disagree and 7.15% strongly disagree respectively. Those participants with undecided responses on availability and utilization of counselling services were 6%. This study implied that, majority of healthcare workers utilize professional counselling services when confronted with work or life style related challenges.

#### V. Conclusion

Based on the researcher's findings, the study revealed high utilization of counselling services by healthcare workers as represented by 79% where low utilization of counselling services was indicated by 14.2% respectively. Those participants with undecided responses on availability and utilization of counselling services were 6%.

#### VI. Recommendation

Based on the researcher findings above, the following recommendations were made for future scholars and policy makers.

The Ministry of Health, policy makers, government and non-governmental institutions should come up with standard policies that mandates incorporation of employee workplace counselling as an intervention that increases employee's resilience levels through cultivation of positive and effective coping mechanisms.

There is need to for the government through the Ministry of Health to fund, recruit and deploy counsellors and psychologists to offer workplace counselling to employees in each Departmental Ministry as a measure of mitigating work-related and lifestyle burnout and stresses.

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