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RESEARCH PROJECT

**ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF UTILIZATION OF DENTAL SERVICES AMONG THE
URBAN POOR IN MAJENGO WARD, MOSHI URBAN DISTRICT, KILIMANJARO
REGION, TANZANIA**

***BY: SHIMBA ESTHER REUBEN
BSDT/000208/312/14144
MAIN CAMPUS THIKA
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT: DENTAL SCIENCES***

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Abstract

Introduction

In Tanzania, Moshi urban district population is 10.4% of the total population of the Kilimanjaro region, with 6.5% of these living in urban slums and likely to be people of low social economic status. The urban poor are less likely to access dental services though they have a high burden of dental disease

Objectives

This study assesses the levels of utilization of preventive and curative dental services, as well as to determine the individual and health system factors influencing the use of oral health services among the urban poor in Kilimanjaro region.

Methods

A cross sectional study design using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection was used. Multistage sampling was used and 30 houses were purposively selected. Five respondents were then randomly sampled from each of the 30 houses, giving a total of 150 respondents. A framework assessing individual and health system factors as well as their influence on utilization of preventive and curative dental services was used and data was analyzed.

Results

The level of utilization of preventive dental services was 16.1% and this was associated with preference for private or public health facility. Level of utilization of curative dental services was 47.4%, and self medication with drugs was the most common (49.8%) alternative method of dental treatment used by the urban poor.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Perceived need, dental pain and preference for public or private health facility are important individual and health system determinants of utilization of dental services.

Efforts for community awareness and sensitization concerning the benefits of practicing preventive dental services, among the urban poor, need to be improved. The government should invest more in oral health care in the public facilities.