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Potential utility of WHO approach to improving the quality and expanding the coverage of health services to adolescents

Such an approach could certainly be useful for improving the quality and expanding the RH services for adolescents if well implemented. However, funding is needed for its implementation. To better support this strategy and advocate for the canalization of more funding towards adolescent health services, it is imperative to demonstrate the impact of the WHO approach on the health of adolescents, and its role in reaching the final health outcomes.

A way to improve the quality of the services is by taking into larger account the community, well known as a key element in the implementation of primary health care strategy. Community should play a role in the planning, execution and monitoring of primary health care activities, including the provision of certain services at the grass roots level (nutrition, mental health, family planning etc) and the search for appropriate solutions to local health problems and the mobilisation of resources. Increased community participation in the management (and possibly financing) of RH adolescent services through various committees could enhance the youth participation by fighting stigma and facilitate the implementation of such programmes even if they are health services based. The real involvement of the community will help in the improvement of the quality of the services provided.

Feasibility of such an approach

For this strategy to succeed it is vital that health ministries of countries bolster the role of the health sector in collecting and disseminating strategic information, developing evidence-informed policies, forming critical partnerships with other sectors, etc. Unfortunately, ministries of health are not always able to play this leadership role, because they lack the capacity/the expertise, the willingness, or the resources to do so. Similarly, district and health facility level staff may not be able to take on the tasks suggested by WHO.

Guidelines, indicators of quality service provision, additional procedures and protocols exist for adolescent-friendly primary care and appropriate secondary and tertiary referral. Medical and nursing education and training, including the development of interpersonal communication and counselling skills, can enable health professionals to confidently meet the needs of the young in an adolescent-friendly environment. However, despite all efforts, these elements are far from universally integrated into capacity building for service providers.

Assignment documents

1. [WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development. Improving the quality and expanding the coverage of health services for adolescents. WHO's approach. Paper presented at: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research; 2010 Sep 11; Geneva.](#)
2. [WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development. The evidence base for our approach to improve the quality and expand the coverage of health services for adolescents. Paper presented at: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research; 2010 Sep 11; Geneva.](#)