

ABSTRACT

Childhood tuberculosis causes high mortality among children below fourteen years mainly in sub-Saharan Africa including Kenya. Challenges in diagnosis, and management are thought to largely contribute to this high morbidity and mortality. However, the knowledge, practices and perception of healthcare workers are poorly understood. Consequently, a cross sectional study was carried out to assess the knowledge, practices and perception of fifty health care workers on the diagnosis of childhood tuberculosis at public and private healthcare facilities at Bureti Kericho County. Purposive sampling was used to recruit health care workers. Both quantitative and qualitative study techniques were used. Data collection tools used included key informants and semi-structured questionnaires. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 and presented using frequency charts, proportions and tables. Results showed that (45.5%) of health care workers had significant knowledge gap in their ability to diagnose childhood TB. Although 50% of respondents had more than five years working experience in TB diagnostic facilities, 72.7% had not been trained on TB diagnosis. Perception of healthcare workers towards TB diagnosis and implications on successful management was wrong either, with only (36.4, %) having the correct perception, Out 27 .3% who had received training 15.7% focused on both TB diagnosis and infection. Majority (70%) of facility staff had not been trained on paediatric TB, while (65.9%) of health facilities had no standard WHO guidelines for TB diagnosis. Majority (65.9%) of the health care workers served at level four facilities while (34.1 %) served at primary health care facilities. The proportion of healthcare workers with adequate knowledge updates about Gene Expert as first line diagnostic procedure was (20.5%), while (3 L4%) had adequate knowledge about childhood, TB National Guidelines procedures. Informants mainly consisted of nurses and other healthcare workers, whose proportions were 80% and 20%, respectively. The study concluded that inadequate knowledge and inappropriate perceptions and practices contributed adversely to poor diagnosis and management of childhood TB in the study area. The study recommended trainings on diagnosis of childhood Tuberculosis to health workers.