

ABSTRACT

A good health seeking behavior (HSB) for malaria treatment among children with malaria-related fever is important for the reduction of morbidity and deaths. Despite this recognition, still many children with malaria-related fever do not get appropriate treatment in time due to poor health seeking behavior. However, there has been limited studies on health seeking behavior among caregivers of children under-five years in sub-Saharan Africa. A descriptive cross-sectional study was employed to evaluate the promptness of seeking care at the facility, home and facility-based practices of malaria related fever by 199 caregivers with children under five years. Also, 4 healthcare workers in Child Welfare Clinic at Mumbias model health centre were interviewed. The study employed structured questionnaires and key informant interviews to collect data from caregivers and health care providers respectively. Purposive sampling was used to choose the study participants while health care workers stationed in child welfare clinics were respondents to key informant interviews. About 32% of the decision on when and where to seeking initial care was made by other members of the family other than mothers who are always in custody of the children, while 88% of the caregivers did self-medication before visiting the facility and 40% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the services offered at the facility. It is evident in some cases that decision making is centered on male head of the household. This calls for a need to empower female caregivers to make health related decisions especially those that need prompt action. As much as self-medication cannot be avoided, there is a need for health education to caregivers to enlightens them on appropriate practices. Similarly, proprietors of drug outlet must be sensitized on malaria treatment policy in order to sell drugs to confirmed malaria cases only. Also, health facility factors such as long waiting time, healthcare workers' attitude and unavailability of prescribed drugs must be addressed to enhance confidence in seeking care at the health facilities.