Family Medicine physician ; leaders of primary health care in Malawi

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Why did we do this study?

This study aims to evaluate how the six key roles are perceived in the Malawian context at Family Medicine training sites. This is the first study to measure the impact of Family Medicine in Malawi. Results will help to further develop the postgraduate curriculum.

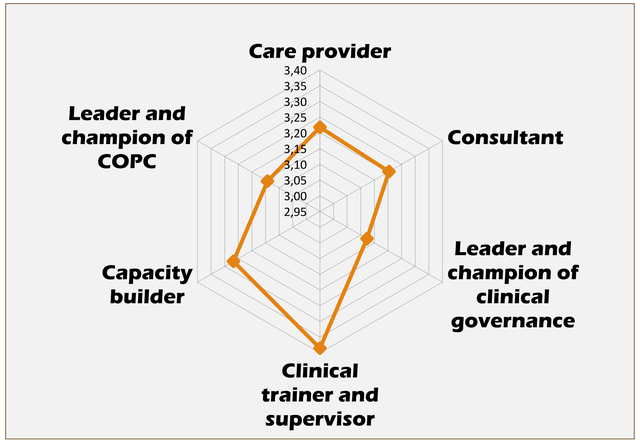
Family Medicine
Malawi's road to the future

Family Medicine:

Improve primary health care in Malawi

The 4 year postgraduate Family Medicine MMED program started in 2015 at the current Kamuzu University of Health Science (KUHeS) . There are 2 district teaching hospitals (Mangochi and Nkhoma) and 2 central teaching hospitals (Blantyre and Lilongwe). Currently there are 4 graduates and 14 registrars.

The postgraduate Family Medicine program aims to train primary health care leaders. Six key roles have been described for a family physician in Sub-Sahara Africa to contribute to achieve universal health coverage.



Malawi

Postgraduate Family Medicine training hospitals:
Nkhoma Mission hospital
Mangochi District Hospital

Malawi is located in Southern Africa

81% of Malawi's 20 million population live in rural areas, relying on health centers and district hospitals for care.

4 central hospitals and 28 government district hospitals

District hospitals often have no specialists and usually only 1 or 2 junior doctors.

The Government of Malawi mandated the Family Medicine department to train Family Medicine consultants for its 28 district hospitals

Family Medicine physicians make an impact at the training sites

Family Medicine physicians (in training) make an impact at the two training hospitals in all areas. The highest impact is related to clinical trainer (3,4) at the 2 district sites, followed by the role as Capacity builder (3,3).

This study shows that family medicine physician make an impact at district teaching site. This suggest that Family physician are able to contribute to health system strengthening in Malawi though health care provision and capacity building among the multi- disciplinary health care teams.

Six key roles of a Family Medicine physician in Sub Sahara Africa*

Methods

Primary health care educational research.

A cross-sectional survey** about the perceived impact of family medicine physicians

162 health care providers working together with Family medicine physicians and/or MMEDs family Medicine
Mangochi district hospital , Nkhoma mission hospital.

Each statement regarding a role could be scored 0-5 (5 highest impact). A score 3 or higher indicates high impact in this area

100 participant responded from Mangochi and 62 from Nkhoma. The numbers are in ratio with the total number of Health care workers per institute

56% of the participants are male

The majority of the participants are clinical officers

Position in the hospitals of the respondents

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The perceived impact of the 6 keys roles of a Family Medicine physician in Malawi. ectmih2023.1840948
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*Adapted from Maaike Flinkenfogel et al Human Resources for Health, 2020
** Adapted from Pasio et al, BMC Family, Practice, 2014