

Platinum certification in the Ideal Clinic Programme and healthcare workers' perspectives on the “platinum status” in Gauteng, South Africa.

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Background

The Ideal Clinic Realisation and Maintenance (ICRM) programme initiated in 2013 aimed at systematically correcting historical deficiencies and improving the quality of Primary Health Care (PHC) at public sector clinics in South Africa. We examine the progression of PHC facilities to ICRM platinum certification status and healthcare workers' perspective on the implementation of ICRM towards achieving platinum status.

Methods

This was a mixed-method cross-sectional survey study at 45/362 PHC facilities in Gauteng randomly selected, ~10% by district and Ideal Clinic category (2018). Additionally, secondary data were extracted from the ICRM dashboard in 2021 to describe the transition of facilities to platinum. Descriptive analysis was used to summarise time to platinum certification status, defined as time from initial certification in years a facility takes to achieve platinum status. Qualitative responses from healthcare workers on ICRM programme implementation experiences of platinum status requirements were analysed thematically. Data analysis was conducted using STATA version 14 and MS Excel.

Results

Of the 45 clinics that were evaluated for ideal clinic certification in 2015, there was a platinum-certification coverage of 6.7% (n=3), this increased to 61.4% (n=27) by 2020. The median time to transition to platinum certification was 2.0 years, IQR (0.0-4.0) among

community health centres, other facility types 4.0 years IQR (2.0-4.0). Of the 138 staff interviewed from 27 platinum facilities, 76 (35.8 %) reported that the ICRM programme was not successfully implemented. The reasons cited include general poor clinic conditions, staff shortage and shortage of space and infrastructure challenges, while implementation success was attributed to; provisions of clear ICRM guidelines, availability of implementation plans, staff training and support, teamwork, role clarity and motivation to address structural and resource challenges.

Conclusion

Despite the steady increase in facilities with platinum certification, staff at platinum facilities still perceive the ICRM programme implementation as unsuccessful due to persisting challenges at the clinics which raises the question whether the Ideal Clinic status corresponds to facility operations in reality.

Advocacy message

Facilities with platinum certification still have poor clinic conditions raising the question whether the Ideal Clinic status corresponds to facility operations in reality.

Key words: Ideal, clinic, certification