

Attraction and Retention of Newly Graduated Medical Doctors to Deprived Regions in Ghana: A Qualitative Case Study

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Abstract : Healthcare delivery is labor-intensive; the role of the health worker is, therefore, indispensable in maintaining and improving individual and population health. In Ghana, doctor-patient ratio is 1:10,450, with a disproportionate tilt in favor of the relatively resource rich southern part of the country. The Upper West Region located in Northern Ghana, is among the poorest regions in the country. The study was aimed at finding out the reasons why medical doctors are unwilling to accept postings to the Upper West Region where their services are needed most despite some efforts to attract, motivate and retain them. Current initiatives by the Ministry of Health and its partners to attract and retain doctors in the region were also examined. Qualitative methodology was employed with an in-depth interview guide to collect data. Sixteen respondents comprising medical doctors, health managers, and other health-related partners purposively selected took part in the study. Data were recorded, transcribed, coded, and categorized into themes in tandem with the objectives of the study. The study found that medical doctors are unwilling to take up appointments in the Upper West Region because of limited opportunities for career and continuing professional development, poor financial inducement, and weak leadership, among other important contextual social and cultural factors. Critical success factors to surmount these challenges include concessions and sponsorship for medical specialization training for doctors and clear implementable national and local policies on postings.

Keywords : attraction, retention, medical doctors, deprived regions, Ghana

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