

Evaluating the Impact of a Child Sponsorship Program on Paediatric Health and Development in Calauan, Philippines: A Retrospective Audit

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Abstract : Aim: International child sponsorship programs comprise a considerable proportion of global aid accessible to the general population. Team Philippines (TP), a healthcare and welfare initiative run in association with the University of Notre Dame Sydney since 2013, leads a holistic sponsorship program for thirty children from Calauan, Philippines. To date, empirical research has not been performed on the overall success and impact of the TP child sponsorship program. As such, this study aims to evaluate its effectiveness in improving pediatric outcomes. Methods: Study cohorts comprised thirty sponsored and twenty-nine age- and gender-matched non-sponsored children. Data were extracted from the TP Medical Director database and lifestyle questionnaires for July-November 2019. Outcome measures included anthropometry, markers of medical health, dental health, exercise, and diet. Statistical analyses were performed in SPSS. Results: Sponsorship resulted in fewer medical diagnoses and prescription medications, superior dental health, and improved diet. Further, sponsored children may show a clinically significant trend toward improved physical health. Sponsorship did not affect growth and development metrics or levels of physical activity. Conclusions: The TP child sponsorship program significantly impacts positive pediatric health outcomes in the Calauan community. The strength of the program lies in its holistic, sustainable, and community-based model, which is enabled by effective international child sponsorship. This study further supports the relationship between supporting early livelihood and improved health in the pediatric population.

Keywords : child health, public health, health status disparities, healthcare disparities, social determinants of health, morbidity, community health services, culturally competent care, medically underserved areas, population health management, Philippines

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