

ABSTRACT

Material Resources in Jamaica's Primary Health Care Centres

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A national study of management aspects of the primary health care services in Jamaica provided data on material resources (facilities, utilities, furniture, equipment and supplies) available at health centres. It was postulated that a description of resources and of their relationship to output could be useful, and the study set out to develop composite indices to measure material resource levels. Staff at a sample of 92 health centres, in all parishes, were interviewed to provide objective statements of resources present and subjective assessment of their adequacy and condition.

Results showed that certain basic material resource items were present in a relatively high proportion of health centres but others, perhaps less crucial, were scarce. The lower level health centres were less well supplied with resource items than the others, even after standardising for their different needs.

The data provided evidence that output by personnel was related to level of material resource inputs.

Experimenting with formulation of composite indices of material resources, considerations of sensitivity, simplicity and credibility led to the conclusion that indices based on objective statements were as appropriate as the more

complicated ones based on subjective assessments.

Use of indices based on objective data showed that the South-Eastern and Western health areas had higher levels of resources than the North-Eastern and Southern areas.

It was concluded that composite indices based on simple statements and calculations can be useful in monitoring levels of material resources, and that material resources probably have an effect on output from health centres.