Abstract

The study was aimed to analyze the role of village level health workers in the delivery of primary health care in Kottayam district of Kerala. The objectives of the study were to assess the performance of village level health workers (JPHN and JHI), determine the services received by households of the study area, assess the facilities of selected sub-centres and to identify the problems and issues in the delivery of primary health care. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Health workers of 32 randomly selected sub-centres and 640 households of the study area were included. Quantitative as well as qualitative data were generated and sub-centre facilities were observed. Findings revealed that majority of the health workers scored ‘good’ in their self-rated performance, whereas majority of the households rated health worker’s performance as ‘poor’, expecting more from the health workers. The JPHN’s work performance was significantly higher (t=6.31, p<0.01) than that of the JHI’s. Work performance was significantly influenced by the population coverage in both the groups of workers. The health workers scored very low in routine house visits. Majority of the beneficiaries received reproductive child health services in the study area. Most of the sub-centres were functioning in a single room without basic facilities. Health workers were unable to perform multi-purpose roles entrusted to them. Lack of specific division of responsibilities between JPHN and JHI affects the services to the community. Disparity in training and promotion criteria of village level health workers demoralizes their enthusiasm especially of the JPHN’s. The results of the study are discussed with recommendations.

Key words: Primary health care, Village level health worker, Junior Public Health Nurse (JPHN), Junior Health Inspector (JHI), Role, Work performance, Household, Sub-centre.