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Asiimwe Denis Douglas

Ramullah N. Kasozi

Sarah Kiguli

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Equity in Access to Care: How about the Socially Vulnerable groups in Northern Uganda Asiimwe Denis Douglas(1) , Ramullah N. Kasozi(2), and Sarah Kiguli(3)

(1) and (2) 4th year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (M.B.Ch.B.) students, Faculty of Medicine, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda; (3) Lecturer, Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.

CONTEXT: Primary Health Care in Uganda is provided through the Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package. UNMHCP aims to provide essential health care for all. Northern Uganda has been at war for twenty years.

SETTING: In 1995 Uganda created internally displaced people (IDP) camps to provide security for the population attacked by the rebel group Lord's Resistance Army. Approximately two million people (85% women and children), live in 144 IDP camps. The difficult living conditions in IDP camps may have a direct effect on health.

OBJECTIVES: 1) To determine whether UNMHCP meets IDPs health needs; and 2) To highlight ways how IDPs health needs can be addressed.

DESIGN: Two randomly selected camps were visited. Data were collected through direct observation, key informant discussions, and review of available IDP data.

FINDINGS: The findings were 1) Women and others in IDP camps face a multitude of social problems; 2) IDP camps have inadequate supplies of clean safe water and waste disposal systems; 3) Shelters are small, overcrowded huts; 4) The majority of the > 1,000 Northern Uganda deaths per week occur outside a health facility; and 5) The IDP depend on the World Food Program for sustenance.

CONCLUSION: UNMHCP does not fully meet the health needs of Northern Uganda's socially vulnerable people. A more effective response requires ramping up services to address the magnitude of the social problems and unmet IDP health needs. Health professional training could empower health service providers to better address Uganda's socially vulnerable groups.

Pictures were taken in Gulu District and Pader District of Northern Uganda. **Fig.1:** IDP camp with poor sanitation as evidenced by the human excreta and polythene bags on the land. **Fig.2:** Pit latrine very close to surrounding homes in the IDP camp. **Fig.3:** IDP waiting in line to collect the much needed water for their daily use. **Fig.4:** A husband sits with his two wives and children. The family was voicing their concern about the lack of basic needs (i.e. food, water, etc.) and limited access to health care in IDP camps.

Fig:1



Fig:2



Fig:3



Fig:4

