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Improving access to quality adolescent and youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa: A 30-month success storySundrapragasen Pillay¹, M Muzigaba¹, S MacDonald¹ and G Reiprich²¹Enhancing Care Foundation, South Africa²Health Focus GmbH, Germany

In South Africa (SA), adolescents and youth represent a critical target group at high risk of HIV infection and other health and psycho-social challenges, yet they make insufficient use of public sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. The project objectives were to address this core issue by improving the youth friendliness of clinics in the target South African sub-districts, increasing youth utilization of SRH services and improving youth ratings of service quality. The multi-faceted approach comprised: Improving training of nurses; improving youth health relevant skills; enhancing knowledge and attitudes of service providers; supporting the application of a quality management approach to health service delivery; addressing shortage of youth health-targeted support materials; engaging youth in the process and enhancing cooperation and coordination between key stakeholders. Results indicated that from a baseline measurement of zero, 58% of clinics met the National Department of Health's (NDOH) 5 minimum standards to be classified as adolescent and youth friendly services implementing sites. The number of SRH services used by young people aged 10-24 years increased by a margin of 59%. Strong positive change was reported for satisfaction with quality and confidentiality of the services as well as for helpfulness of staff. These results achieved in a relatively short timeframe support a case for the scaling up this approach which could potentially accelerate the successful implementation of the adolescent youth friendly services program of the SA NDOH as well as provide valuable lessons to other countries aiming improve such services.

Biography

Sundrapragasen Pillay is a Medical Doctor and Researcher based in South Africa. He is the Director of the Enhancing Care Foundation, a Research Institute of the Durban University of Technology. He is the Heads of an international infectious diseases research site funded by the US National Institutes of Health. He was the Principal Investigator of the Medical Education Partnership Initiative grant of the University of KwaZulu Natal.

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