

Extent of Utilization of Healthcare Services and Challenges Among Residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu

Tadzmahal S. Uddin¹, Mary Ann E. Lopez²

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8035-0635>¹, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7566-5152>²

St. Bernadette of Lourdes College^{1,2}

tauddin@sbic.edu.ph¹ malopez@sbic.edu.ph²

ABSTRACT

This quantitative descriptive-comparative study assessed the extent of healthcare service utilization and the challenges influencing healthcare utilization among residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu. Specifically, the study examined the utilization of maternal and child health services and general medical consultation and screening services, as well as the significant differences in healthcare utilization when respondents were grouped according to selected demographic characteristics. A total of 381 residents participated in the study through a structured and validated researcher-made questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that maternal and child health services were highly utilized, particularly antenatal care, prenatal visits, childhood immunization, and nutrition services, demonstrating the effectiveness of primary healthcare programs at the Barangay Health Station. In contrast, general medical consultation and preventive screening services were only moderately utilized, with lower participation in diabetes screening, communicable and non-communicable disease screening, and chronic disease consultations. Healthcare utilization differed significantly by age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status, indicating that demographic characteristics influence health-seeking behavior. Respondents also reported moderate challenges affecting healthcare utilization, with financial constraints, long waiting times, limited healthcare resources, and cultural beliefs being the most prominent barriers. The study concludes that while primary healthcare services, particularly maternal and child health programs, are effectively utilized, preventive healthcare services require greater promotion and accessibility. Strengthening health education, improving preventive healthcare programs, increasing resource availability, and implementing culturally responsive interventions are recommended to enhance healthcare utilization and support the achievement of Universal Health Care at the community level.

Keywords: *Healthcare utilization, primary healthcare, maternal and child health services, preventive healthcare, Barangay Health Station, healthcare challenges, universal health care*

INTRODUCTION

Access to healthcare is vital for improving health outcomes. However, many individuals, especially in rural and low-income areas, encounter obstacles such as financial difficulties, limited services, and accessibility issues. These challenges significantly hinder healthcare utilization (Tegegn & Negeri, 2022; Hasan et al., 2022). In the Philippines, public health facilities primarily provide primary healthcare, aligning with the goal of Universal Health Coverage and aiming to ensure everyone has equitable access to quality services (Domingo,

2024; World Health Organization, 2023). Despite numerous studies, there remains limited information on healthcare service utilization and the challenges faced in rural communities, particularly in Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining healthcare service utilization levels and the barriers residents face in accessing these services.

Statement of the Problem

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of respondents in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Marital status
 - d. Socioeconomic status
 - e. Educational attainment
 - f. Employment status
2. What is the extent of utilization of the healthcare services in Barangay Health Station in Brgy. Bus-bus, Jolo, Sulu?
 - 2.1. Maternal and Child Health
 - 2.2. General medical health consultation and Screening
3. What is the significant difference in the utilization of healthcare services in Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu when grouped according to the demographic profile?
4. What is the level of challenges that influence the utilization of health care services in Jolo, Sulu?

Scope and Delimitations

This study examined how residents in Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu use the local Barangay Health Station and the challenges they face in accessing care. It focused on adults who have used these services, looked at healthcare utilization across different demographic groups, identified barriers to access, and provided recommendations to improve healthcare access in the community.

Review of Related Literature

The literature highlights that using healthcare services is crucial for improving health outcomes and achieving Universal Health Coverage. However, several factors influence this utilization, such as whether services are available, accessible, affordable, and of good quality, as well as the strength of primary healthcare systems (World Health Organization, 2023). Research shows that various demographic factors impact how people seek healthcare. For instance, women, older adults, and individuals with higher socioeconomic status tend to utilize healthcare services more than those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Shobichah & Astuti, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on three main theories that help explain why people in the community use healthcare services.

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Nursing Theory

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory emphasizes that individuals are responsible for maintaining their own health, while nurses provide support when self-care is insufficient. In this study, healthcare utilization is influenced by individuals' ability to practice self-care and access available health services despite barriers such as financial, informational, and physical challenges.

Conceptual Framework



Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 presents the study's conceptual framework, illustrating the inputs, process, and outputs that guided the research. It shows how demographic characteristics and healthcare service utilization were examined to identify factors affecting healthcare utilization and develop strategies to improve healthcare access in Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative method to gather and analyze numerical data regarding healthcare service usage and the obstacles affecting its access among residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu (Pamidimukkala & Kermanshachi, 2025).

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to assess healthcare service utilization and the challenges encountered by residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu, and to determine differences across demographic groups. The design enabled the objective collection and statistical analysis of numerical data (Pamidimukkala & Kermanshachi, 2025).

Research Steps

The study was conducted after obtaining approval from the research adviser, ethical clearance from the SBLC Ethics Review Board, and permission from the Barangay Health Station. Informed consent was secured from all participants, and data were collected and managed confidentially in compliance with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012).

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The study used purposive sampling to select eligible residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu, who had utilized at least one Barangay Health Station service and provided informed consent. Ethical clearance and institutional permission were obtained before data collection, and all responses were kept confidential and managed in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 before being analyzed.

Data Analysis Methods

The data collected will be coded, organized, and analyzed using suitable statistical methods. Frequency counts and percentages will be used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents. Weighted mean and standard deviation will show how much healthcare services are used and what challenges affect their use. Independent samples *t*-tests and one-way ANOVA will be used to find differences in healthcare utilization based on demographic factors. Based on the results, strategies to improve healthcare service use in Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu will be created.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The study examined whether there were significant differences in the use of healthcare services at the Barangay Health Station in Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu, by age, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, education, and employment. Researchers collected data using a validated questionnaire and analyzed the results with descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was accepted or rejected at a 0.05 level of significance.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

This study examined healthcare service utilization and the challenges affecting its use among residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu, focusing on services provided by the Barangay Health Station. Using purposive sampling and a structured questionnaire, the findings relied on the respondents' honest and accurate responses. The study adhered to the ethical standards of the St. Bernadette of Lourdes College Ethics Review Board (ERB), with ethical clearance and the necessary permissions obtained prior to data collection. Written informed consent was secured from all participants, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained through coded identifiers and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). All research records were securely stored, and proper acknowledgment of sources was observed to ensure research integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings showed that most respondents were young adults, mainly female, married, college-educated, unemployed, and living in low-income households. Residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu, made good use of maternal and child health services, especially prenatal care, health education, immunization, and nutrition services. However, the use of general medical consultations and screening services was moderate, with preventive screenings for both communicable and non-communicable diseases being among the least used. There were

notable differences in healthcare utilization based on age, gender, marital status, educational level, and socioeconomic standing, but employment status did not seem to affect it. Respondents indicated facing several challenges that impacted their access to healthcare, with financial constraints, medication costs, long waiting times, and a preference for traditional healing practices being the most common obstacles. These findings highlight that while the Barangay Health Station provides essential maternal and child health services effectively, there is a need to improve the utilization of preventive healthcare and address economic, service-related, and cultural barriers to enhance healthcare access for the residents of Barangay Bus-Bus, Jolo, Sulu.

SUMMARY

This study looked into how residents of Barangay Bus-Bus in Jolo, Sulu utilize healthcare services and the challenges they face. It found that maternal and child health services are widely used, while general medical consultations and preventive screenings are moderately accessed. The level of healthcare utilization varied based on several factors including age, gender, marital status, educational background, and socioeconomic status, with employment status showing no significant effect. Respondents faced moderate challenges in accessing healthcare, mainly due to financial issues, limited resources, and cultural beliefs.

CONCLUSIONS

The Barangay Health Station has successfully provided maternal and child health services, leading to their high uptake among residents. However, preventive healthcare services are not being fully utilized, and demographic factors alongside financial, organizational, and cultural obstacles significantly influence healthcare access. To improve healthcare utilization, it's vital to enhance preventive care programs and tackle the barriers that hinder people from seeking care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Health, Local Government Unit, and Barangay Health Station should focus on strengthening preventive healthcare initiatives, improving resource availability, and boosting community health education to encourage more residents to seek care. Healthcare workers need to keep raising health awareness and fostering community engagement, while residents should be motivated to participate in preventive health services. Future research should involve larger samples and diverse communities, employing various methods to better understand the factors affecting healthcare utilization and to evaluate strategies that enhance primary healthcare services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors sincerely thank their research adviser, panel members, institution, respondents, families, and colleagues for their invaluable support and contributions to this study. They also express their deepest gratitude to Almighty God for His guidance, wisdom, and strength throughout the research.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

The authors used artificial intelligence (AI) solely for language editing, grammar correction, and writing clarity, while all research activities, data analysis, interpretations, and final approval of the manuscript were performed by the authors, who assume full responsibility for its accuracy, originality, and integrity.

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