



## **STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN CONTEXT OF HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS' SHORTAGE IN TANZANIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

Deodatus C. KAKOKO<sup>1\*</sup>; Daudi. O. SIMBA<sup>2</sup>; Innocent A. SEMALI<sup>3</sup>; Mangi J. EZEKIEL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Behavioral Sciences, School of Public Health and Social Sciences, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, P.O. Box 65015, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

<sup>2</sup>Department of Community Health, School of Public Health and Social Sciences, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

<sup>3</sup>Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Public Health and Social Sciences, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

*\*Email of corresponding author: knkuru@yahoo.com*

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to assess perceptions on the shortage of health service providers, strategies of coping with shortage of health service providers and implications of the strategies of used in coping with shortage of health service providers. Semi-structured interviews were held with the regional and district AIDS Coordinators, Medical Officers, Health Secretaries, as well as in-charges of health facilities in five regions of Tanzania. Data analysis followed principles of open coding. The shortage of health service providers was described to be a huge problem. Service providers are compelled to ask the patients to wait for some hours, make priorities of the day and thus allocating health workers to the neediest areas and to the critical health conditions, providing services as quick as possible. However, it was reported that specializing in some units is likely to magnify the problem of health service providers' shortage. Recommendations to improve the situation of health service providers included continuing employing health workers and making sure that employment is based on kinds of available in the job market. Shortage of health service providers results into a heavy burden among service providers and affect the quality of health services.

**Key words:** health service providers, human resources, shortage, Tanzania.