

Vanuatu Health Research Symposium
22-24 September 2021
Port Vila, Vanuatu
Hosted by the Vanuatu Medical and Dental Association



Research Summary

Submission by: Deed, Emily
Position/Title: Sexual and Reproductive Health Specialist, UNFPA Pacific
Collaborators: Len Tarivonda
Contact email: deed@unfpa.org
Category (clinical/public health): Health facility survey
Data focus: TORBA, PENAMA, SANMA, MALAMPA, SHEFA, TAFEA, National

Title Vanuatu Health Facility Assessment: Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Adolescents and Youth

Abstract

Background:

A Vanuatu Health Facility Readiness and Service Availability assessment was undertaken in 2020 to identify service availability, training and readiness gaps in health facilities to enable targeted approaches in system and service improvements to impact sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including for adolescents and youth.

In 2013, the teenage pregnancy rate was 81/1,000 women ages 15-19, with 2018 estimations increasing to 85.3/1,000. 30% of girls experience sexual abuse before the age of 15. Persons with a disability, who represent 12% of the population², are particularly vulnerable.

Methods:

Facility assessments were undertaken by Ministry of Health (MOH) teams across clinics, dispensaries, health centres and hospitals. Adolescents and youth were classed as age 10-25 in line with international classifications. Global WHO facility standards for adolescent and youth friendly health services³ were assessed.

Results:

Data collection covered 99% of facilities nationwide. Of these,

- 58% (n=92) provided SRH services to youth and adolescents, no facilities reached adolescent and youth friendly standards;
- 35% (n=56) have 1 or more staff trained on providing SRH services to adolescents and youth;
- 25% of all facilities and 42% of facilities offering SRH services to adolescents or youth do not require adult consent (n=39);
- 11% (n=17) provide SRH services to adolescents and youth, including short term contraceptives without parental consent;
- 36% (n=58) provide SRH services to adolescents and youth, and open at weekends (at least 1 day);
- 3 MOH facilities offering SRH services to adolescents and youth have a wheelchair accessible examination room

Conclusion and recommendations:

Adolescents and youth have significant barriers in accessing SRH services. Barriers for young people and adolescents with a disability are particularly high.

The assessment identified opportunities for impact to inform system and capacity development and investment:

- Ensuring access to family planning for adolescents and youth without additional consent requirements and removing fees for those unable to pay;
- Increasing capacity of health workers in providing adolescent and youth friendly services;
- Increasing access to the emergency contraceptive through drugs list expansion, supply chain enhancements, and capacity development;
- Increasing access hours to SRH services, particularly outside of school hours,
- Improving accessibility for youth and adolescents with a disability through improving infrastructure.