Discussion and debate

Can South Africa (SA)’s re-engineered primary health-care service deliver the Youth-friendly Health Services (YFHS) package? The thrust of the Department of Health’s new shift towards preventive health services relies heavily on community health workers (CHWs) as members of ward-based outreach teams that form the basis for health promotion activities, problem recognition, referral and home-based care.[1]

The YFHS model, previously adopted by the SA Department of Health, aims to deliver effective, appropriate and accessible services to adolescents and young people, who are a recognised high-risk group and who have very specific health needs, but who are notoriously difficult to reach through the established health system.

A community-based approach using community members rather than professionals seems to be ideally suited to help deliver YFHS, but is it?

In their Hot Topic article in this issue, Koon et al.[2] discuss the possibilities of involving CHWs in the YFHS package. They point out advantages and drawbacks, and motivate for continued informed debate and further research. In this, their contribution extends beyond the question at hand; it reminds us that many policies and strategies are subject to multifactorial inputs that may effect success or failure, and that review, research, discussion and debate are continually needed to confirm or modify health service decisions.

A few other articles in this issue contribute to discussion and debate. Feeley and Norris[3] estimate the extra energy and sodium or failure, and that review, research, discussion and debate are subject to multifactorial inputs that may effect success beyond the question at hand; it reminds us that many policies and strategies are subject to multifactorial inputs that may effect success or failure, and that review, research, discussion and debate are continually needed to confirm or modify health service decisions.

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A warm welcome and best wishes to John Pettifor as the new editor!