

**UTILIZATION AND CHALLENGES OF
LABORATORY SERVICES IN
NORTH OKKALAPA GENERAL AND
TEACHING HOSPITAL**

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ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional hospital-based study using mixed method was conducted to describe the utilization and challenges of laboratory services in North Okkalapa General and Teaching Hospital during August to November 2019. For quantitative data, secondary data were used by reviewing reports and records for year 2018 and 2019. For qualitative data, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews were also done. On finding, the total tests performed by both main and 24-hour laboratories in 2018 was (838,359) and average of (2,300) tests was done in a day. Among tests performed by each laboratory sections, half of the tests performed were biochemistry and one third by microbiology tests. In blood bank, a total of (28,870) units of blood was collected and majority of blood received from National Blood Center during 2018. From blood issue section, a total of (30,742) units of blood and blood components were utilized by different departments and average of (80) units were used daily. The proportion of inefficient use of laboratory tests at 24-hour laboratory section for the first six months of 2019 was 4.1% during these period. The findings from the interview of health staff revealed that there were many challenges such as insufficient human resources especially in laboratory technicians, no regular training to technicians, not a proper laboratory design of main laboratory buildings for prevention from different hazards and inadequate space and storage area for laboratory machines, equipment and reagent. There was sometime challenge in quality of laboratory service due to shortage of technicians that can affect laboratory turnaround time. Most patient's attendants mentioned the prolong waiting time at the sample and result collection process. Based on the findings, full sanction of human resources should be provided at laboratory and intensive refresher trainings and supportive facilities should be given to the laboratory technicians. Laboratory Information System (LIS) should be institutionalized to reduce waiting time for results and prevent unnecessary missing such as inefficient use of laboratory tests. The findings of this study can be used in supporting on determination of the needs of the laboratories, human resource development, building and infrastructure upgrading, implementation of LIS system, effective infection control and antibiotics stewardship program in hospital and may contribute next steps for strengthening policy.