

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FACILITATED BY INFRASTRUCTURAL UPGRADES AND RENOVATIONS

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"The very first requirement in a hospital is that it should do the sick no harm; badly constructed houses do for the healthy what badly constructed hospitals do for the sick" – Florence Nightingale

Access to qualitative healthcare for all is generally accepted as a worldwide goal, for instance SDG 3 "Good health and well-being". Simultaneously, access to health-care has been identified as a key indicator of a nation's growth. Ideally, need should be the major determinant of health-care utilization, although other factors such as physical, biological, socio-economic and cultural factors clearly have effect. One of those factors is the ability to access care which includes whether it is available, timely and convenient, and affordable (Figuroa et al., 2017). The significance of quality health care facility in ensuring sustainable development cannot be over emphasised. Literature shows that lack of basic health care facilities have resulted in manufacturing inefficiency, diminishing productivity, decreased life expectancy, and an increase in infant mortality rate (Ajala, Sanni, & Adeyinka, 2005).

When it comes to accessing healthcare, many people in our communities face significant challenges. One of the major issues is the presence of inadequate quality healthcare facilities nearby, as well as the difficulty in getting to the ones that exist. For inadequate healthcare facilities, the problem is not that there are no health facilities but are grossly inadequate and not equipped to cater for the health needs of people. A conspicuous example is the General Hospital Tede in Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The facility was formerly in disrepair for fifteen years and struggled to provide quality care to its patients. Under the leadership of Governor Seyi Makinde and the Oyo State Health Insurance Agency's Executive Secretary, Dr. Sola Akande, OYSHIA took on the challenge of renovating and modernising the hospital, investing in the facility and resources within one year. The Agency also collaborated closely with hospital professionals who were already available prior to the renovations to establish new treatment procedures and guarantee that patients received the best care possible for their unique requirements. One of the indicators of the functionality of a health facility is the utilization rate. It is interesting to note that, following the completion of the project, **a 33.2% increase in G.H.Tede's utilisation rate was observed between the first and second halves of the year 2022, corresponding to pre and post**

renovation respectively. Currently, in the first quarter of the year 2023, G.H.Tede's utilization rate is peaked at 26% with patients reporting much improved experiences and outcomes. Below are charts (figure 1&2) showing the facility's utilization rate pre and post renovation.

Figure 1

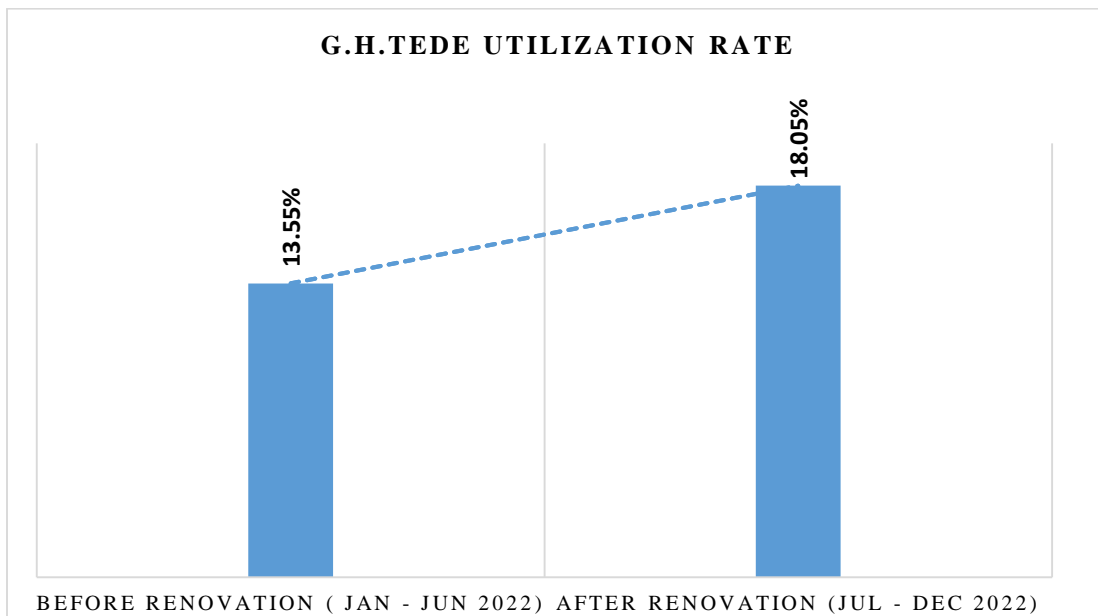
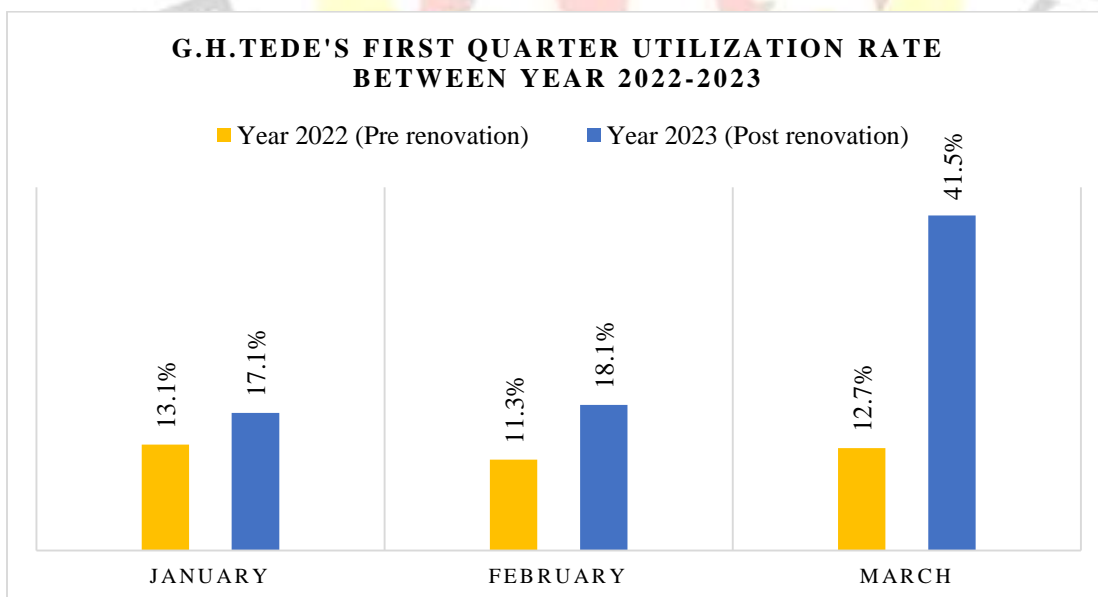


Figure 2



General Hospital Aremo in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria is another hospital which is located near a cemetery, discouraging and making it an unappealing alternative for many people seeking healthcare and treatment there. It is not surprising though, as cultural belief is another reported factor known to affect access to healthcare facilities (Vaughn, Jacquez, & Bakar, 2009). Though still undergoing renovation, to address this issue, the Agency re-constructed a major gate/entrance channelling a different route leading directly to the community, making it much easier for people to access the healthcare they needed. Additionally, significant improvements to the hospital's infrastructure and services were made, including upgrading medical equipment and providing additional training for staff.

Consequently, a **6.89% increase in utilization was observed, as depicted in Figure 3 and 4, averaging from 12.20% to 13.04%**. This shows that a well-structured and high-quality healthcare system may have a stronger influence than superstitious beliefs and attitudes.

Furthermore, it was observed that after renovation and upgrading, the previously abandoned gate/entrance near the cemetery is now being used by locals and indigens to access the facility. All of these factors have contributed to the increase in utilization. This demonstrates that beliefs, culture, attitudes, and most importantly, healthcare-seeking behaviour may be positively influenced by the availability of a good healthcare system on the ground.

Figure 3

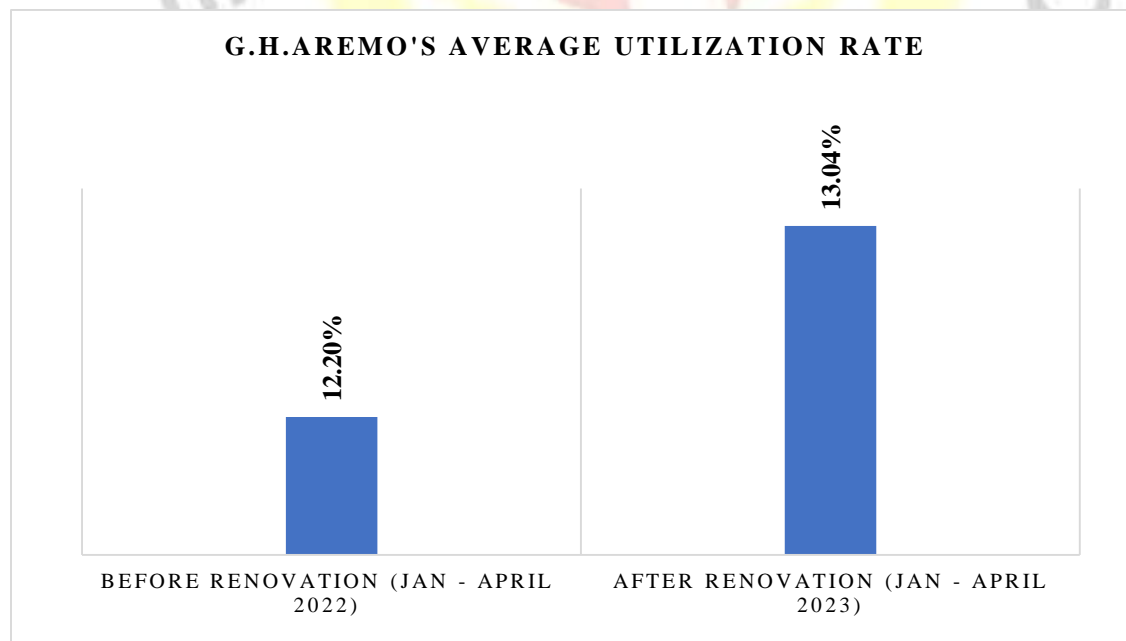
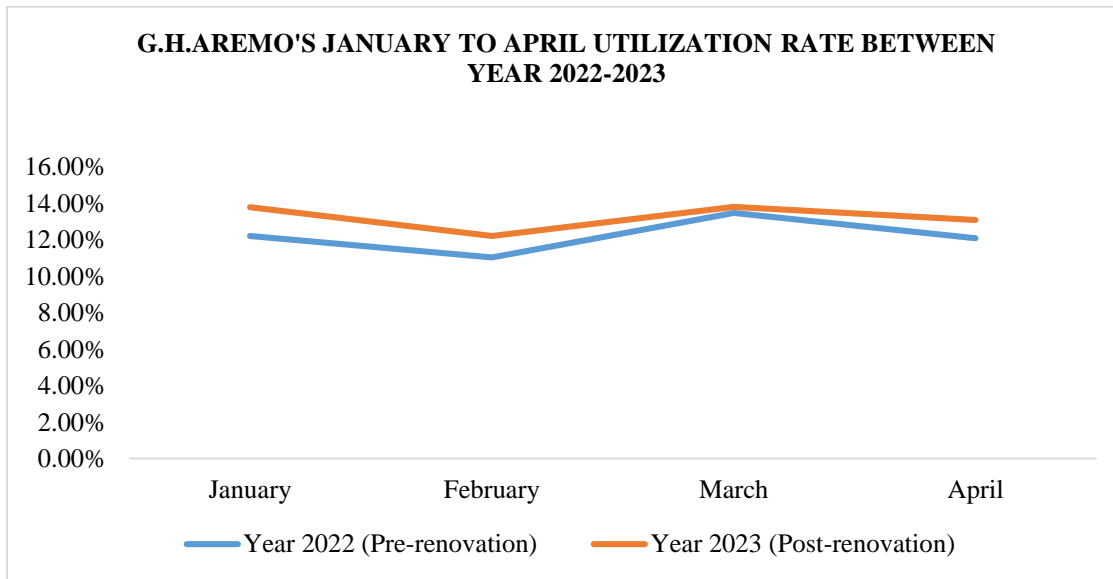


Figure 4



Conclusion

By investing heavily in these public hospitals, upgrading medical equipment and technology, improving facilities, and providing additional training for staff, some of the biggest barriers to healthcare access were tackled. Today, OYSHIA is extremely proud of the impact the Agency has had on the communities, and optimistic to continually strive for excellence in Oyo state healthcare service delivery. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that everyone in our community has access to quality and affordable healthcare, when it is needed as we take critical efforts towards attaining excellent healthcare delivery in Oyo state.

(Pictures of G.H.Tede before Renovation)



(Pictures of G.H.Tede after Renovation).



(Pictures of G.H. Aremo before Renovation)



(Pictures of New Gate / Entrance at G.H. Aremo)



(Pictures of G.H. Aremo after Renovation)



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