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Use of ‘Boda Bodas’ and ‘Mobile phones’ in the continuity of Palliative care Provision amidst Covid-19 Lockdown Restrictions. An innovative Experience at Kitagata District Hospital

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Background: Kitagata hospital is a 100 bed capacity, located in Sheema district; South Western Uganda .The hospital has a catchment population of 39971 and is strategically located to ensure access to health care services. It’s also the main District Hospital serving 5 Districts of greater Bushenyi.

Covid-19 produced a lot of uncertainty and persistent worries on safety and continuity of Palliative care service delivery. At Kitagata hospital, Boda Bodas and mobile phones became the ultimate bridge between patients and health care providers.

AIM: To highlight the role of Boda Bodas and Mobile phones in the Continuity of PC provision to patients/care takers amidst Covid- 19 lockdown restrictions.

Methods: At Kitagata hospital 12 children and 47 adults were served by using ‘Boda bodas’ and ‘mobile phones’. The PC Clinician would make a phone call to the patient/care taker whose next hospital review was due and would also explore any challenges faced by the patient/care taker. The clinical staff would then pack medication and send to the patient through the Boda Boda rider. On reaching the patients home the rider would call back the clinical staff to ensure safe delivery and more clarification about drug use.

Results: Despite travel restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic, PC services at Kitagata hospital remained operational through innovations such as; use of Boda Bodas to deliver pain relief medication and other essential drugs, mobile phones for coordinating referrals, enrolling new patients and directional use of the delivered medication to the patient/caretaker and asking about the patient’s wellbeing and how the family is helping the patient to cope. Lessons learnt and Conclusions.PC provision can prove more difficult in unprecedented circumstances like in the era of Covid-19 lockdown. But in PC, there’s always something that can be done as evidenced by use of Boda Bodas and mobile phones to alleviate suffering and promote quality of life.