

EFFECTIVENESS OF BROADCAST MEDIA CAMPAIGN ON CERVICAL CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Cancer of the cervix is the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in their productive years. In Nigeria, the death figures increase yearly despite the numerous ways of preventing the disease. The rise is now from 10,000 deaths in 2008 to 14,089 in 2016 and Cancer Fact Sheet 2017 predicted a double rise in the figure by 2020. This, as studies revealed, is due to late detection and diagnosis, poor knowledge of the cause, symptoms, preventive measures and Pap smear screening of cervical cancers. In Nigeria, numerous broadcast campaigns have been put up to increase the knowledge, change behavior and boost practice of the screening and preventive vaccine. This study assessed the level of exposure to media messages on cervical cancer and also knowledge of cervical cancer among women in Owerri North LGA. Using survey research design and 200 respondents as sample size, findings revealed that majority of the women in Owerri North LGA are not exposed to cervical cancer broadcast campaigns and awareness level of the disease, its causes, symptoms and prevention is low. The study therefore recommended a multi media approach and integration of interpersonal communication on cervical cancer campaigns.

Keywords: Influence, Cervical cancer, Campaigns, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Women.

Introduction

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in Nigerian women and the most common female genital cancer constituting a major cause of mortality among Nigerian females in their most productive years, *Obayendo (2016)*. Cancer Fact Sheet (2017) reported that Nigeria has a population of 50.33 millions of women ages 15 years and older who are at risk of developing cervical cancer. The report further indicates that 14,089 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 8,240 die from

the disease yearly, a disproportionate number of these cases (85 %) and deaths (87 %) occur among women living in low and middle income areas, *Obayendo (2016)*.

This disease which is caused by sexually transmitted disease known as Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection and other factors such as multiple sex partners, protracted use of contraceptive or [birth control pills](#), early exposure to sex, smoking tobacco and HIV patient can be prevented through vaccine, screening for early detection and treatment. The number of these untimely deaths attributed to cervical cancers irrespective of untold campaigns and media broadcast messages aimed to eradicate or reduce the incidence of cervical cancers escalate yearly. However, research has proven that cancer is preventable through vaccine and screening for early detection and treatment. To this effect, there are media campaigns on cervical cancer. With the increasing number of cases and related deaths as stated by Sunday Punch (2011) who puts it at 235,000 deaths yearly, one wonders on the effectiveness of broadcast media messages. This study therefore seeks to determine the extent to which women in Owerri North LGA are exposed to broadcast media messages on cervical cancer; and to gauge respondent's knowledge of the diseases; its causes, symptoms, prevention, early detection and treatment of the disease.

Empirical review

In a study titled, determinants of Cervical Cancer Screening Uptake among Women in Ilorin, North Central Nigeria: A Community-Based Study, conducted in 2015 by Idowu A, Olowookere A. S., Fagbemi A. T. and Ogunlaja O. A.1 (2016) they discovered that most women in North Central Nigeria demonstrated poor knowledge about cervical cancer and low uptake of cervical cancer screening. The study was conducted in urban communities using multistage sampling technique among 338 participants in Ilorin, North Central Nigeria and a pretested questionnaire was used for data collection. They observed low uptake of cervical cancer screening recorded in the study was attributable to such factors as low socioeconomic status of study participants. This implies that most did not have university education and were not employed. Educated and employed people are expected to have better access to health information which could help them take appropriate health steps.

In another study conducted by African Journal of Reproductive Health (2010) in 2010 titled knowledge and Attitudes towards Cervical Cancer and Human Papilloma virus in the Geo-political zone – urban and rural Northern Southern (among rural and urban dwellers) at FCT Abuja also discovered a low level of awareness about the human papilloma virus and cervical cancer in the society. The study used both survey and focus group discussion. This low level of awareness of HPV and cervical cancer in contrast to the high level of awareness about STI in the respondents and low insistence on condom use during intercourse shows a knowledge practice disconnect which can be fuelling the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases within the

community. It establishes a strong case for education awareness and other interventions in the community against HPV infections, especially the pathogenic strains which cause cancer.

In another study, Perception and utilization of cervical cancer screening services among female nurses in University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria conducted by Oyedunni Sola Arulogun et al (2012) revealed that knowledge and utilization of cervical cancer screening services among the female nurses at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan is low. Upgrading the knowledge base of nurses therefore becomes imperative as they play an important role in the prevention of cervical cancer in the community. The study used random sample as the research method and questionnaire for data collection

In yet another study, Incidence of Cervical Cancer in Calabar, Nigeria, by Ebughe G., Ekanem I. A., Omoronyia O. E., Omotoso A. J., Ago B. U., Agan T. U and Ugbem T. I in 2016 (2016) also found out that Cervical cancer is common and very high in Calabar with cervix uteri (ICD) as the only type of cervical cancer noticeable. They noted that the number of infected patients doubled yearly. Content analysis was the method used in studying Calabar cancer registry, between 1st of January 2004 and 31st December 2013 and stored in the Calabar cancer registry. The authors concluded that effort must be redoubled towards public health measures that will bring about reduction in its incidence. This is because cervical cancer is the most easily preventable cancer.

This study is anchored on **theory of reasoned action (TRA)** and planned Behavior (TPB) which started as the Theory of Reasoned Action in 1980. They are health communication theories. Reasoned action theory is one of the three classic models of persuasion developed by [Martin Fishbein](#) and [Icek Ajzen](#) in 1967 and was derived from previous research that began as the theory of attitude. The theory explains that an individual's decision to engage in a particular behavior is based on the outcomes the individual expects will come as a result of performing the behavior i.e. It has to do with an individual's basic motivation to perform an action.

This theory suggests that stronger intentions lead to increased effort to perform the behavior, which also increases the likelihood for the behavior to be performed while planned Behavior (TPB) which was expanded by [Icek Ajzen](#) emphasized that the motivation depends on the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior of interest. It entails a consideration of the outcomes of performing the behavior. He concluded that the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed, LaMorte (2016). The broadcast media has all it takes to mesmerize the world. The radio as a veritable tool of human development with its potentials of immediacy, ubiquitous, besides it beats

distance, literacy barriers and demands minimal know-how to operate the set, can go a long way in impelling women to required practice of screening and vaccine. While the Television which is audio-visual and brings events life to generate empathy from viewers with its immediacy facility can be used for teaching, instructing, explanation and dramatization of the causes, symptoms, preventions of cervical cancer and the dangers of late detection. Other aspects of these broadcast media that can be utilized to elicit required action are through well researched commentaries and documentaries, talk shows and jingles. These justify these media as the most credible and believable to combat the disease.

Methodology

The quantitative research design was adopted for this study. Specifically it made use of survey method to seek for audience response in order to determine the effect of the campaigns on the women of Owerri North Local Government, Imo State, Nigeria. The scope of the study is on women aged 14- 45 years within the District/Areas in Owerri North Local Government Area. The districts are Egbu, Emekuku, Emii, Ihite/Ogada/Oha, NazeObibi, Uratta and Orji. According to the National Population Commission Report (2006), the population of women within 14-45 years is 58,465.

Using the Australian calculator (National statistical Service) the sample size is 200. The probability sampling method was used with particular reference to proportionate stratified. The method was used since the population is already stratified in districts and areas. Then the elements are drawn randomly from each stratum in such a way that the relative proportions of the strata in the resultant sample are the same as in the parent population. To this end, a total number of 200 women were chosen from the seven districts.

The measuring instrument was the questionnaire carefully designed to contain the major variables in the study; the variable being the awareness of cervical cancer broadcasts campaigns, knowledge, attitudes and problems hindering practice of screening and vaccine.

Discussion of findings

On the extent of **exposure of women** in Owerri North LGA to broadcast media messages on cervical cancer, it was found out that only 28% of the women are exposed to campaigns or messages on cervical cancer. Another 120 (60%) were not exposed while 12% of the respondents were unsure of their exposure status. While the respondents are relatively unaware of cervical cancer, the knowledge of cancer generally is significantly high at 92%. According to the ranking of the 28% respondents exposed to messages on cervical cancer, the sources of information was primarily friends, church, radio and relatives. This is to say that while majority of the women are not exposed to media messages, the major source of information for the

informed few remains interpersonal. This report here is consistent to the findings of [Ahmed](#), [Sabit](#), [Idris](#) (2016) who in their **study of Knowledge, attitude and practice of cervical cancer screening among market women in Zaria Nigeria, found out that** most of the respondents heard about cancer screening from healthcare personnel and few heard from friends, family and media in the order of importance.

However, this is in contrast to the results in the study: knowledge and Attitudes towards Cervical Cancer and Human Papillomavirus conducted by Nnodu et al (2010). In that study, the sources of information for cervical cancer include health officials, television, next of kin, friends, magazines, and school almost in the order of importance in the geopolitical zones and locations. This was supported by another study conducted by Nnodu et al (2010) which examined the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs within the community, among college students, adults attending general out patients but the study was done in both an urban as well as rural setting where health personnel were identified as the most important source of information on these diseases followed by the media and the next of kin.

On the knowledge on the diseases; its causes, symptoms, prevention, early detection and treatment of the disease, findings here indicate that awareness of the causes, symptoms and prevention of the disease is very poor. Responses to questions revealed that 25 (13%) of the 200 respondents know the causes, symptoms, prevention, early detection and treatment of the disease, while 131 (65%) do not know and 44 (22%) are not sure of their knowledge on the subject matter.

This is consistent with the studies of Hyacinth, Adekeye, Ibeh and Osoba (2012) on the Cervical Cancer and Pap Smear Awareness and Utilization of Pap Smear Test among Federal Civil Servants in North Central Nigeria. Also, that of Nnodu et al (2010) recorded low awareness of the disease among respondents. This is in contrast to the findings of [Ahmed](#), [Sabit](#), [Idris](#) (2016) where majority of the respondents (66.9%) have heard of cervical cancer, and of these 68.6% have heard of cervical cancer screening and been screened. The high level of awareness in this study may be due to the fact that community health outreach programs usually target market women and of recent a group of American cancer experts visited the market. They discussed issues of cancer prevention, particularly screening. They also offered cervical cancer screening service at the nearby Sabon Gari Comprehensive Health Centre.

Be that as it may, this work supports most reports from Nigerian communities who found that majority of respondents never heard of cervical cancer or cervical cancer screening. Ogunbode *et al* in [Ahmed](#) S. A, [Sabit](#) K, [Idris](#) S. & R (2016) carried out a study among market women in Ibadan and only 19.7% were aware of cervical

cancer screening. Similarly, in a study in Aba still in Ahmed S. A, Sabitu K, Idris S. & R (2016), only 16% of respondents had knowledge of screening services.

In the studies conducted by Hyacinth, Adekeye, Ibeh & Osoba (2012) Cervical Cancer and Pap Smear Awareness and Utilization of Pap Smear Test among Federal Civil Servants in North Central Nigeria also recorded low awareness of the cervical cancer among women. Further, studies done among hospital workers had similar reports to the studies of Ahmed, Sabitu & Idris (2016). The study among female health workers in Ilorin showed the high level of awareness to be 69.8%.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the respondents are not exposed to broadcast media cervical cancer campaigns. The Church, friends, health workers, and relatives are their major sources of information. This is largely due to low broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer. Hence the low awareness of the women on the risk factors, early detection and prevention which are the goals of the campaigns.

Recommendations

Thus the researchers made recommend that:

1. Broadcast media of communication should be encouraged to frequently air messages on cervical cancers to create massive awareness of the disease
2. To boost the knowledge of cervical cancers, its causes, symptoms and preventions, massive broadcast media well-researched commentaries, documentaries, dramas, talk show etc should be embarked on. Other development media of development communication such as enlightenment programs at market, village squares, offices and schools as was done in the case of Ebola should be employed.
3. Religious leaders should be encouraged to incorporate in their different Churches, Personality Development programs on cervical cancer, its causes, symptoms and prevention.



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