Utilization of Primary Healthcare Services among Women of Child Bearing Age in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State

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Abstract:

This paper presents the assessment of the utilization of primary health care services among women of child bearing age in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State. Using a descriptive cross sectional design; a sample of 308 women of child bearing age was selected through multistage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the study revealed that majority of the participants had average knowledge on primary health care services 247(82.5%) with the mean score of 7.0±2.35. Also the majority of the participants utilized PHC at a high rate 191(63.9%) with the means score 20.5±6.8 and there is a significant relationship between the respondents knowledge and utilization of primary health care services ($r = .285$; $p=0.000 < .05$). This study concluded that the women of child bearing age have average knowledge on primary health care services and also the level of utilization of primary health care services is high among women of child bearing age. It was recommended among others that continuous awareness through health education should be done in other to utilize PHC services.

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Introduction

Good health is a basic need for an economically and socially productive life. The aim of the delivery of health care by any country cannot be achieved without an accurate appraisal of the health service delivery by the populace for whom it is intended. The desire for global communities to promote and provide essential health care for all has pave way for the development of the concept of primary health care (PHC) as a path to achieving this goal. This was intended to help close the gap between the current disparities in health status between citizens of various socio-economic classes in both developed and developing countries around the globe (WHO, 2017).

Primary health care as illustrated in the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration is a grassroots' solution to affordable and accessible health care for everyone. The strategy is targeted to solve the major health issues in the nation by offering preventive, curative and rehabilitative services (Alenoghena, et al., 2014). Nigeria is still in the early stages of the epidemiological transition; where preventable pregnancy and childbirth complications result in multiple illness and death among women and children in the region.

The situation puts a danger to the struggles of the nation to achieve the SDGs. According to Egharevba (2016), meaningful increase cannot be achieved without good health and quality of life. Around one million children die yearly before their fifth birthday, about 52,900 Nigerian women die yearly from pregnancy-related complications out of a total of 529,000 maternal mortality globally (WHO, 2019). In reality, urgent action is needed in Nigeria to decrease its high maternal mortality level which is more prevalent in poverty filled rural areas of Nigeria where the primary health care system is inadequate and overstretched. (Azuh, et al., 2017).

The opinion of the community about health programs and their participation in organizing health services, influence their level of participation and utilization of related health services; this means that when members of the society view health programs positively, it will enhance good attitude towards such programs and actively participate in it (Odetola, 2015). The utilization of health care services is linked to the personal attributes of the users, accessibility, availability, quality and cost of services. The present state of most PHC facilities does not only bring danger to the nation but also affects the rate of use of PHC facilities (WHO, 2010).

PHC services have been partly neglected and underserved. Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics of Nigeria reported that 60% of pregnant women still visit untrained traditional birth attendants (TBA) during antenatal care and delivery. Survey data provided by Okonofua et al. (2018) submitted that conventional antenatal attendance is low, and pregnant women still visit untrained TBA's. Regrettably, this has led to poor health and well-being among women resulting in poor maternal and child healthcare. In addition, most PHC facilities are in a state of disrepair, with either outdated facilities and equipments and virtually non-existent referral networks. In most PHC centers where facilities are present, inadequate health care workers, transportation problems, communication, family decision-making, cultural values illiteracy, disease existence, traditions and poverty tend to drive families in most communities in Nigeria towards traditional health services (Idris, et al., 2013).

Thus, the study assessed the utilization of primary health care services among women of child bearing age in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State Nigeria. This study specifically:

1. assessed the level of knowledge of women of child bearing age on primary healthcare services; and
2. assessed the level of utilization of the PHC services by women of child bearing age.

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following questions:

1. What knowledge do women of child bearing age have on primary health care services?
2. What is the level of utilization of PHC services among women of childbearing age?

Research Hypothesis

This research hypothesis was postulated for this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between respondents' knowledge and utilization of PHC services among women of child bearing age

Methodology

A descriptive cross sectional survey using self structured questionnaires was employed in this study. The study was carried out among women of child bearing age in Epe local government area of Lagos State. Sample size for this study was calculated using Cochran's formula. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 308 women of child bearing age from Epe local government area of Lagos state. Quantitative method was used for data collection. This involved the use of self administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed using information obtained from literatures. In other to establish validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was presented to experts in the field to determine the face and content validity of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest reliability of the measuring instrument. The researcher administered the questionnaire twice on twenty women of child bearing age residence within Ibeju-Lekki Local Government Area, Lagos state within a time-interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores from the administered copies of the questionnaire were correlated and evaluated using the statistical tool of Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The coefficients of stability from the test-retest reliability method were 0.71 and 0.84. These results showed that the instrument has good test-retest reliability. The data was compiled, coded and analyzed using statistical package for social Sciences (SSPS) version 23. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage was calculated from the data and the results were presented using tables.The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Research Question 1: What Level of knowledge do women of child bearing age have on primary health care services?

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Table 1: Level of knowledge of women of child bearing age on Primary health care services

Level of knowledge	Category of Scores	Frequency	percentage	Mean ±SD
Above average	10-14	34	11.4%	
Average	5-9	247	82.6%	7.0 ±2.35
Below average	0-4	18	6%	
Total		299	100	
Minimum score= 3; Maximum score= 14				

Respondents were asked 14 knowledge questions to test them on their awareness of primary health care services. The knowledge of respondents was shown by giving a score of 1 to respondents who picked right answer to the knowledge statement and 0 to respondents who picked the wrong answer to the knowledge statements. The scores were categorized into the following: below average - respondents who scored 0-4, average knowledge-respondents who scored 5-9, above average knowledge- respondents who scored 10-14. Table 1 shows that majority of the participants had average knowledge on primary health care services 247(82.6%) while very few of the participants 18(6%) had below average knowledge. The means score of the participants knowledge was 7.0±2.35 which can be categorized as average knowledge. This implies that majority of the women of child bearing age had average knowledge regarding primary health care services.

Research Question 2: What is the level of utilization of Primary health care services among women of childbearing age?

Table 2: Level of utilization of Primary health care services among women of child bearing age

Level of Utilization	Category of Scores	Frequency	percentage	Mean ±SD
High utilization	20 -28	191	63.9%	
Average utilization	10-19	84	28.1%	20.5 ±6.81
Low utilization	0-9	24	8%	
Total		299	100	
Minimum score= 0; Maximum score= 28				

Table 2 shows a high level of PHC service utilization among women of child bearing age. The result shows that majority of the participants utilized PHC at a high rate 191(63.9%) while very few of the participants had a low rate of primary health care utilization 24(8%). The means score of the participants utilization was 20.5±6.81 which can be categorized as high utilization of PHC. This implies that majority of the women of child bearing age utilizes primary health care services at a high rate.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between respondents' knowledge and utilization of PHC services among women of child bearing age

Table 3: Relationship between respondent's knowledge and utilization of primary health care services among women of child bearing age

		Utilization of PHC	Remarks
Knowledge on PHC	Pearson correlation	.285**	**Reject null hypothesis**
	Sig. (2-tailed) N	.000 299	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 3 revealed a significant relationship between the respondents knowledge on primary health care and utilization of primary health care services (r = .285; p=0.000 < .05). The hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between respondents' knowledge on PHC and utilization of PHC" is hereby rejected by this finding. This implies a significant relationship between respondent's knowledge and utilization of primary health care services.

Discussion

The outcome of this study revealed women of child bearing had average knowledge on primary health care services. Knowledge is power. The knowledge of primary health care services among the women of child bearing age influence their ability to make use of primary health service, and participate as a medium of promoting health education in community, which is an important pace for community health development (Odetola, 2015); this implies that, when members of the community view health programs positively they are then likely to have a good attitude to such programs and participate actively in it. It is however contrary to the finding in a study in Turkey, where there was the lack of clients knowledge, and could be as a result of health information not given in local languages (Taner and Antony 2006). Knowledge of primary health services will aid clients in making strategic choices and in matching expectations with service provision

Findings of the study further revealed a high level of PHC service utilization among women of child bearing age. This is similar to the study carried out by Agofure and Elizabeth (2017) on the utilization of Primary health care services which revealed that majority, 97.10% of the respondents utilized primary health care services. Findings from Egbewale et al., (2012) also revealed that 76% of the respondents had utilized PHC facilities within their health district. The most frequently used primary health services were immunization, maternal and child health including family planning, health education and treatment of common ailment.

The findings of the study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between respondent's knowledge and utilization of primary health care services among the respondents. Knowledge of primary health care services motivated participants significantly to utilize the PHC services efficiently and effectively. In this regards, exposure of women to

educational program would further enhance their utilization capacity resulting in reduction in maternal and child morbidity and mortality. This finding is similar to that of Meh, et al., (2019) where they observed that the increasing rates of high maternal morbidity rates was due to lack of knowledge. Similarly, findings from Nsubuga, et al., (2015) showed that majority of women of child bearing age have good knowledge on availability and accessibility of PHC. Therefore, appropriate knowledge that is constantly being reviewed and communicated to women will continue to be a major factor in the utilization of PHC services by women.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is established that primary health care service is highly utilized due to adequately and average knowledge of the participants on primary health care services. However, more attention should be placed on those with inadequate knowledge. Also, there should be mass sensitization of women in the Primary Health Care facilities as regards the availability of maternal and child health services at the health facility. Thus, improve access and satisfactory usage of such services.

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