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Media Public Enlightenment on Hepatitis and Audience Awareness of Preventive Measures and Management Strategies in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated media public enlightenment on Hepatitis and audience awareness of preventive measures and management strategies in Ebonyi state. The Health Belief Model and Agenda setting theories were used while survey method was used in the study. The population of the study was 2880.400 which represent people living across the three senatorial zones in Ebonyi state, with the sample size of 400 arrived at with the use of Taro Yamane formula. Questionnaires served as instrument for data collection. Out of the 400 copies distributed, 350 copies were retrieved and analysed using Findings which show that majority of the respondents have the knowledge of Hepatitis through different media while some were informed by health workers, peer groups and one on one interaction. Despite the level of awareness, majority are yet to be tested and vaccinated, or are aware of precautionary measures to stay safe. The study further revealed that the level of awareness on Hepatitis Virus is low compared to its devastating effect and suggests more awareness through the social media, TV talk shows, Radio gingles, billboards, hand bills, door to door campaigns, etc. The study recommends that government and NGOs should sponsored more regularly, different media awareness outreaches to educate the masses towards the prevention and transmission of Hepatitis virus and to sponsor massive testing so as to detect the virus early for vaccination, effective management and treatment.

Keywords: Awareness, Hepatitis, Management, Media Public Enlightenment, Prevention

INTRODUCTION

Health and well-being contribute to the growth of any society, no wonder the popular saying that health is wealth. The socio-economic stability of any society is weakened if the health status of the masses is not adequately checked. The mass media as the watchdog of the society owe it as a duty to adequately inform the masses on sensitive issues which borders on their health and overall well-being.

The overriding mission of the media is the public right to know of events, issues and occasions which could be a source of worry or public concern. This vital role of the media is carried out by both the conventional, mainstream and new media technologies with the common goal of enlightening the public. As powerful instrument of information dissemination on government and non-governmental programmes, policies and projects the media is duty bound to create awareness which will serve the interest of the masses.

Hepatitis has become a major public health challenge globally. Hepatitis is a viral infection of the liver that are classified as A,B,C,D,and E. Hepatitis B is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) which could

be contracted through contact with body fluids such as blood, saliva, semen, and vaginal fluid of an infected person.

Hepatitis has become a major health challenge to our society as it can cause liver damage and scarring (cirrhosis) which often lead to liver failure, cancer of the liver, kidney diseases and deaths.

To curb the spread of this deadly virus, there is need for adequate public enlightenment of the masses to create awareness on preventive measures from contacting hepatitis virus and also on measures to effectively manage infected persons, this study therefore seeks to examine the media public enlightenment on hepatitis and audience awareness of preventive measures and management strategies in Ebonyi state.

Statement of the Problem

In recognition of the urgent need to create sufficient awareness on the risk factors that could expose the masses to the Hepatitis virus and the need for them to take adequate precautionary measures to protect their ill-health and avoid infection and transmission and learn ways of management of the virus, media has enormous responsibility in this regard. One of the pivotal roles of the mass media is public enlightenment on issues of importance to the public, the media highlight on such sensitive issues that require the urgent attention through aggressive campaign on ways to prevent the spread of Hepatitis Virus. This important function of the media could be hampered by lack of sponsorship of programmes that will reach the audience. There is need to understand the extent in which the government and its agencies have partnered with the media in the campaign on prevention and management of hepatitis.

In their study of 'Assessment of Health Communication Practice on Hepatitis B in south East Nigeria' Adesina, et al. (2020), used their study to determine the communication strategies implored by government and nongovernmental organisations (NGO's) on Hepatitis B (HBV) and their preferred health communication channels for the disease, especially in semi-urban and urban areas of Lagos, Oyo and Ogun states and also according to Wogu et al. (2019) entitled 'communication Health Risk in South-East Nigeria; the case of media campaign Against Viral Hepatitis and its implication for Health Communication'' (2019) 'inspite of the high level of health care services, infection diseases have remained a worrying issue for humans. They led to the emergence of health communication as an important tool for achieving public health objectives in 21st century.

Though there have been campaigns aimed at enlightening the public on dangers of contracting hepatitis virus, the researcher has not seen much study that analysed the impact of such campaigns on people living in Ebonyi state. It is based on this that the researcher intends to close the knowledge gap by also analysing the impact of media campaign against hepatitis in Ebonyi state. Based on the above problems the researcher set out to investigate the media public enlightenment on hepatitis and audience awareness of preventive measures and management strategies in Ebonyi state.

Objectives of the Study

This study is generally aimed at investigating the media public enlightenment on hepatitis and the level of audience awareness of the preventive measures and management strategies in Ebonyi state while specifically the study intends to;

1. Investigate the level of awareness of hepatitis in Ebonyi state, Nigeria
2. Identify the sources of information on hepatitis among residents of Ebonyi state
3. Evaluate their attitude to media campaigns on hepatitis in Ebonyi state
4. Ascertain the level of awareness of hepatitis preventive measures and management strategies

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of hepatitis in Ebonyi state, Nigeria?
2. What are the sources of information on hepatitis among residents of Ebonyi state?
3. What is the attitude of residents of Ebonyi state towards media campaigns on hepatitis?
4. What is the level of awareness of hepatitis preventive measures and management strategies among residents of Ebonyi state?

Review of Related Literature

Hepatitis: An Overview

Generally speaking, no period of time has been identified as the time hepatitis started ravaging human race but it has been established by the world Health Organisation (2017b) that, the disease has been around since the existence of humanity on earth. To understand the meaning and definition of hepatitis, Hornby (2000, P.557) called it ‘‘a serious disease of the liver’’ whereas, the WHO (2020) defined it as ‘an inflammation of the liver that can cause a range of health problems and can be fatal’’ for the department of Health and Human Science, (2020) ‘‘the liver is the second most important organ of the body apart from the brain. The liver filters the bloods, fights infections and processes nutrients in the body. When the liver is inflamed or damaged it can no longer perform its functions effectively’’

Types of Hepatitis

According to the centre for disease control there are five major types of hepatitis, hepatitis A, B and C, D and E which are caused by a virus and are highly contagious.

Hepatitis A is the earliest stage or formation of the virus and other dangerous substances or elements which can cause other forms of hepatitis. According to health experts, hepatitis A can be contacted through the following means; eating or injecting contaminated food or drugs, through seafood where untreated sewage is discharged, stool of infected persons, raw or uncooked food contaminated by the viruses that cause hepatitis, poor hygiene and contaminated water

Hepatitis B is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) which is passed from person to person through the exchange of body fluid. According to (WHO) 2012, one could be prone to contacting HBV when exposed to infected person. This exposure could be through unprotected sex, having more than one sex partner, an infant born from an infected mother, working in an environment that expose one to human blood, travel to regions with high infection rate, man who have sex with other men and sharing needle or other sharp objects among other risk factors. According to the website (www.afriherbalscure.com) Hepatitis B is the most common and deadly among the types of hepatitis all over the world. It is among one of the strains of hepatitis that cause about 90% of cases of acute hepatitis identified by gastroenterologist as the most dangerous and causes liver cirrhosis (a situation where the liver is covered by serious deadly patches or scars leading to liver cancer and death).

Hepatitis C like other forms of the disease, destroys liver cells and loss of blood is noticed in the body of the patient as he or she looks pale and worried emotionally. This causes anaemia in the patient and the symptoms are visible due to weakness and pale disposition.

Hepatitis C is also contacted through direct contact with infected or contaminated human blood, exchange of syringe for injection, unscreened blood transfusion, using non-sterile needles menstruation injuries in the genital tracts among others.

Toxic Hepatitis D this form of hepatitis is caused by excessive consumption of alcohol which damages the liver and renders it useless. Drug addicts who take hard drugs like cocaine, heroin and other toxic drugs could develop this type of hepatitis

Hepatitis E or Liver Cancer

This is the peak of hepatitis which occurs as a result of combination of all forms of the disease. Hepatitis E causes excessive production of cirrhosis as a result of repeated attacks on the liver by the viruses.

Mode of transmission

According to World Health Organization, hepatitis can cause both acute and chronic diseases and the virus is most commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth or through contact with infected persons' body fluid. Hepatitis is the world's most common liver infection which is caused by a DNA-virus; the hepatitis virus (HBV) and considered highly contagious; 50-100 times more infections than HIV. (WHO 2012)

According to the report from Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER) 1999-2021, Hepatitis could be Acute or Chronic. Acute hepatitis infections last less than six months and this is depending on one's immune system and can be cleared within a short period or led to chronic hepatitis lingers more than six months or even for a lifetime in the body because the immune system cannot totally fight and defeat it and. this can also lead to other liver diseases such as cancer and cirrhosis.

Common Symptoms of Hepatitis

According to Ratini (2021, p. 25) "diarrhoea and constant abdominal pain have been recognised as symptoms of hepatitis especially hepatitis C" These symptoms also are signs that the disease has reached a chronic stage or about to reach a chronic stage that requires health experts' services attention for the patient to survive. Other symptoms include unexpected weight loss, headache and tiredness, Anaemia which could lead to loss of memory of the patient.

Preventive Measures

This health condition could be prevented through vaccination recommended for those who are at risk of been infected. The risk factors are as follows

- a. for children under six months,

- b. pregnant women with HBV DNA levels should be vaccinated to curb mothers transmitting to their unborn babies,
- c. people who live with patients of hepatitis,
- d. health workers and all those who come in contact with blood,
- e. those who have other sexually transmitted diseases,
- f. those who have more than one sex partners,
- g. those whose sex partners have hepatitis

Precautionary Measures

To avoid contracting hepatitis there are some precautionary measures to be taken

- a. Find out the HV status of your sex partner
- b. Avoid unprotected sex
- c. Don't use illicit drugs
- d. Be careful when piercing or body tattooing
- e. Take hepatitis vaccine before travelling to area prone to the viral infection
- f. Go for test if you are exposed to infected persons.
- g. Proper hygiene, wash raw vegetables and fruits properly or steam them to get rid of germs
- h. Take good and adequate diet to avoid inflammation of the liver and increase bile secretion (WHO 2017b; and centre for National Cure for Hepatitis, 2021)

Management of Hepatitis

Since there is no specific treatment for hepatitis, WHO recommends adequate nutritional balance and most importantly replacement of fluid lost from vomiting and diarrhoea, Unnecessary medications is not advisable to use drugs especially paracetamol. If one notices any symptoms it is advisable to seek medical attention urgently.

Media Public Enlightenment and Audience Awareness of Hepatitis Prevention and Management

Now that both mainstream media and new media technologies are almost everywhere, they can be said to be sources of information among the masses in more timely and easier means. This can be said to be true because, Hanson (2005, p. 24) opined that;

As mass media consumption grew in the 1950s scholars also started paying attention to a particular medium being used to transmit messages. Until the 1950s most of the effects research focused on the interaction between the sender, the message, and the receiver, ignoring the influence of the medium itself. But the medium used for communicate ids crucial....the medium for transmission can be as important as the message itself, if not more.

The above proves that the media are powerful means of mass information and education at any point in the society. Through different outlets and media platforms and organisations, such government and non-governmental organisations like the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), WHO, both conventional and social media as well as individuals, depend on different medium to enlighten the masses and create awareness of the disease. One example of such media public enlightenment and awareness of the disease include, media coverage of June 3, 2017 launching of the world Hepatitis Day with the theme ‘Eliminate Hepatitis’. This was conducted all

over the country and campaign introduced advocacy work, conferences, screening and vaccination of the masses in order to determine the carriers of the disease and educate them on the prevention and management of hepatitis. The Newspapers, magazines, Radio, Television, billboards, Facebook, Instagram and a host of other media handles actively participated in this enlightenment campaign across the country in 2017.

It is on record according to WHO (2020) that about 400 million people are currently living with the disease all over the world with over 1.4 million deaths yearly. In Nigeria alone according to the WHO, 20-26 million people have been infected by different types of hepatitis. Through media organisations public enlightenment, aimed at informing and educating the masses on how to prevent and manage hepatitis could have been averted. Okoro, Nwachukwu, and Ajero (2015, p. 64) in their reference to National Centre for Health Statistics (2012) wrote; for individuals, effective health communication can help raise awareness on health risks and solutions; provide the motivation and skills needed to reduce these risks, help them find support from other people in similar situations, and affect or reinforce attitudes. Health communication can also increase demand for appropriate health services and decrease demand for inappropriate health services. It can make available information to assist in making complex choices such as selecting plans, care providers, and treatments” for community, health communication can be used to influence the public agenda, advocacy for policies and programmes, promote positive change in the socio-economic and physical environments, improve the delivery of public health and healthcare services.

Another campaign of the media in collaboration with both government and non-government organisations in public enlightenment and awareness on hepatitis is that of the Association for the study of Liver in Nigeria (ASLIN), this association which is made up of professional medical practitioners, especially those in the field of gastroenterology and Herpetology, through their advocacy groups, conferences, media enlightenment programmes like public service announcements and commercials and social media to inform and educate the masses on issues relating to management and prevention of hepatitis.

They also use these media outlets to inform the masses about screening, vaccination and treatment centres of the disease all over the country. Another outing by the Association for the study of Liver in Nigeria (ASLIN) was the 2020 world Bank funded project through the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Initiative (CERHI) at the university of Benin in Nigeria.

Another media public enlightenment and awareness campaign was organised by the ‘LIVE WELL INITIATIVE (LWI) a non-governmental body that organises conference, workshops, empowerment in Africa with a view to curbing liver diseases, especially cancer and hepatitis. Data generated from the organisation’s website www.livewell.com stated that

Live –well Initiative organises conference in Africa, has the aim of empowering African healthcare professionals (HCPs) to diagnose, prevent, treat and achieve a cure for cancer/liver diseases it is a non-governmental non-profit health promotion organisation to have health literacy in Africa by the year 2030.

Also on 11th January 2018, Live –well held a communication outreach within the Mushin metropolis in Lagos state, to educate the masses on the health related challenges involving the liver.

Another advocacy campaign was organised in April, 26th 2017, in Lagos state by the United Nations, Nigeria government in collaboration with the World Health Organisation under the auspices of the Women in Hepatitis Africa (WIHA) who specialises in training women on 'de-stigmatization treatment' against hepatitis. Also to engage the media in advocacy, screening, vaccination as well as training of people on how to combat liver problems, their global agenda is to eliminate hepatitis by 2030.

Other prominent media campaigns organised to enlighten the public on hepatitis are the 'Mega-life Services, which used fliers, tracks, promotions, training of interested members and sale and promotion of drugs and supplements with vitamins, minerals, antiviral and immune boosters for prevention and management of hepatitis and also Safe Injection Global Network (SIGN) organises public enlightenment and awareness to educate the public on the dangers of using contaminated injection syringes and used ones for treatment as this increases the chances of contracting hepatitis.

According to a study by Hayashi, Hutin, Allaf, and Allengranzi (2019) healthcare injection given with reused equipment exposes patients with blood borne pathogens including hepatitis C virus (HCV) and Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV).

Empirical Review

Different scholars have contributed to the understanding of how the media can be used to organise enlightenment campaigns and awareness on the preventive and management of hepatitis using the mass media. Among the studies conducted by these experts are those conducted by Wogu, et al (2019) titled "communication Health Risk in South-East Nigeria; the case of media campaign Against Viral Hepatitis and its implication for Health Communication"

The objective of the study was to investigate media coverage of viral hepatitis in south East Nigeria and the implication it has on health communication among others. The study which made use of cross sectional survey in the five states that made up the south East geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The researchers used structured questionnaire as the data gathering instrument and a representative sample of 500 respondents selected from the capital cities of the 5 states in the south East zone of Nigeria. The researchers used mean, percentage, and analysis of variance tests through the SPSS version 20 and a .05 level of significance.

At the end of the study, it was found out that, even though majority of the respondents were consumers of media contents, only a few of them were aware of the viral hepatitis, symptoms, mode of transmission and curative measures. The researchers recommended that media campaign programmes against hepatitis are required to create more awareness of the disease especially on Sundays and during evening programmes and that further research on the nature and impact of funding media campaigns against the disease are necessary.

The above recommendations have confirmed the need to use the media for creating public awareness and enlightenment on health communication in Ebonyi state where ignorance of the disease virus still exists.

In another study conducted by World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) Nigeria, entitled "Nigeria Employs Numerous Strategies to create

Awareness on Viral Hepatitis Nationwide'' this study conducted in August 2017, explains how both WHO and FMOH carried out campaign and outreaches all over the country to educate and sensitize the masses on the causes, prevention and curative factors of hepatitis. Their findings revealed that Nigeria has high burden of hepatitis B and C, at prevalent rate of 11.2% and 2.0% respectively. The study also showed that Lagos, Bauchi, Rivers and Nasarawa states in 2017 developed strategic plans for the treatment, training and other means of dealing with the disease. In their findings it was further revealed that; lack of awareness among the masses and health workers, low coverage of testing facilities and high cost of laboratory investigations, hamper the fight against the disease. They recommended that; the federal Government of Nigeria should be committed to make available hepatitis preventive and treatment services in all healthcare facilities in the country.

In their study of 'Assessment of Health Communication Practice on Hepatitis B in south East Nigeria' Adesina et al. (2020), used their study to determine the communication strategies implored by government and nongovernmental organisations (NGO's) on Hepatitis B (HBV) and their preferred health communication channels for the disease, especially in semi-urban and urban areas of Lagos, Oyo and Ogun states.

Through a mixed of both quantitative and qualitative research, 582 respondents were used in the study. at tend of the data collection and analysis, the researchers found out that , government agencies and non-governmental organisation working on hepatitis B, predominantly make use of interpersonal communication in getting the people informed of HBV. It was also found out that; some residents of South West Nigeria preferred the internet, as a health communication source of hepatitis B information as against the traditional means of Television, Radio and the Print media.

It was recommended that awareness creation and public enlightenment are needed to educate the masses on hepatitis and other associated with it. This study was confirmed the earlier study conducted by Wogu, et al (2019), Ratini (2021) and the Association of the study of Liver in Nigeria (2020) that, health communication, using both conventional and new media is needed in the enlightenment and awareness of the public on the management and preventive measures of Hepatitis in Ebonyi state in particular and Nigeria in general.

The above recommendations however failed to recognize the importance of government involvement through sponsorship of aggressive public enlightenment of the masses by the media to enable them access such health facilities.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher anchored the study on Agenda Setting theory and the Health Belief Model.

Agenda-setting theory

According to Ndolo (2006, p. 32) this theory was propounded by Walter Lippmann in 1922 when he wrote that; 'the media help put pictures in our heads'' but in 1975, McCombs and Shaw reinforced the theory when they stated that; Audience not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic by emphasises the mass media place upon it''

To anchor this theory to our study the more emphasis the media, through campaigns, enlighten the masses and create awareness of hepatitis disease, its causes, preventive and management measures, the more people know about those steps to take in order to avoid anything that will lead to contact with the virus that causes the disease and also healthy lifestyles that could guarantee prevention.

Health Belief Model

The Health Belief Model according to Okoro, Nwachukwu & Ajero (2015, p. 78) ‘‘is a theory developed by Geoffrey Hochbaum, with further work done on it by Becker, Haefner and Maimon in 1977’’ the researchers cited Burke (2018, p.3) who stated that ‘‘it is a theory that addressed personal knowledge and belief used in health promotion to design intervention and prevention programmes with a focus on assessing health behaviour of individuals through examination of perceptions and attitudes someone may have towards diseases’’. This theory is of the opinion that people may likely accept or reject health intervention programmes, policies and project when they; believe they are susceptible to the condition; believe the condition has serious consequences and when they are exposed to factors that prompt action.

The above theory can be linked to this study in the sense that the mass media public enlightenment and awareness programmes of government and non- governmental organisations in Nigeria in general and Ebonyi state in particular, can help to contribute to peoples’ acceptance or rejection of how to prevent and manage hepatitis.

Methodology

The nature of the problem informed the researcher’s use of descriptive research design that made use of survey method in the study. The reason for this is to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data for the study. This involved the use of questionnaire and in-depth oral interviews from the respondents who were chosen from the entire population of Ebonyi State. Multiple sampling techniques were used to select sample for the study. Data generated from the website of National Population Commission (www.npc.ng.org) stated that; Ebonyi state population was 2,880,400 at the time of this study. Taro Yamane formula was thus used to arrive at a sample size of 400. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were used to generate data. The structured and unstructured questions contained in the questionnaire gave the respondents opportunity to supply their own answers without any form of limitations. Adults who were above the age of 20 years were focused on since they understand better the health implications of hepatitis.

The state was stratified into the existing three senatorial zones which are Ebonyi North, Ebonyi Central, Ebonyi South. Then all the Local Governments in each senatorial zone were listed on separate sheets of paper, folded and thrown into three separate bags, (a bag each for each senatorial zone) from where a local government was selected by means of random sampling. Through this means Abakaliki, Ezza south, Onicha local governments were selected and finally six communities two from each LGAs were selected using the same method, as Nkaliki and Onuebonyi, Onueke and Amudo, and Oshiri and Ukawu communities selected.

Table 1; Senatorial Zones/ LGAs/ Communities Selected for the Study and Corresponding Samples Sizes

Senatorial district	Selected LGAs	Selected Towns	No. of respondent s
Ebonyi North	Abakaliki	Nkaliki and Onuebonyi	80 & 50
Ebonyi Central	Ezza South	Onueke and Amudo	80 & 55
Ebonyi South	Onicha	Oshirri and Ukawu	80 & 50
Total			400

Source: Survey, 2021

A 15 item questionnaire was used to elicit data for the study using the distribution pattern in the above table as a guide. The test instrument was subjected to validity test using test re-test approach and the outcome showed high reliability.

Data Analysis and Result

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 350 copies representing 88% were returned while 50 representing 12% were not returned. Data obtained showed that 222 (56%) of the respondents were married while 128(32%) were single. The age distribution of the respondents according to the data collected fall between the following age range; 20-25 age bracket are 97 (24.4%), 26-30age bracket 67(16.9%), 31-40age bracket are 60 (15.1%), while age bracket 40 and above are 106 (43.6%). The occupational distribution of respondents shows that 103 (25.8%) were civil servants while 200 (50.3%) were traders, 20(5.04%) are students while 27(7.04%) are unemployed. On the educational qualification, 50(12.6%) attended primary education, 145 (36.5%) attended secondary education while 155(39%) attended higher education and above.

Research Question One; what proportion of the respondents is fully aware of the Hepatitis virus in Ebonyi State? To provide answers to the questions respondents were asked whether they are exposed to hepatitis awareness campaign and the responses to the question were presented in the table below

Table 2: Analysis of Respondents Exposure to Hepatitis Awareness Campaign

Responses	Frequency	%s
Yes	246	62%
No	83	21%
Total	350	100%

Source: survey, 2021

The above table reveals that 246 (62%) respondents were exposed to the campaign against Hepatitis, 83(21%) respondents were not exposed to the awareness campaign while 21(5.05%) cannot recall whether or not they are exposed to the campaign.

Research Question Two: What is the respondents' major source of information about Hepatitis?

To find out the major source through which respondents get to know about Hepatitis campaign, the data obtained were represented in the table below:

Table 3: Evaluation of the Major Source of hepatitis awareness campaign

Source	Frequency of response	Percentage
Television	20	5%
Radio	100	25.0
Social Media	57	14.3%
Newspaper	30	7.6%
Magazines	3	0.8%
Interpersonal source	117	29.62%
No source	21	5.05%
Total	350	100

Source: Survey, 2021

The above table revealed the different sources of information of respondents sampled, 20(5%) were informed through television programmes while 100(25.15%) said they were informed through the Radio, 57(14.3%) got to know through the social media, Newspaper 30(7.6%), Magazine 3(0.8%), Leaflets 2(0.2%) while 117(29.62%) were informed through Interpersonal interactions. 20 respondents claimed ignorant of the campaign on Hepatitis.

Research Question Three; what is the level of knowledge of prevention, vaccination and management strategies of hepatitis. The question evaluating the level of knowledge reads; what is the level of awareness of preventive measures and management strategies of hepatitis in Ebonyi state?

Table 4: Evaluation of the level of knowledge of prevention, vaccination, and management of hepatitis in Ebonyi state

Questions	No. of responses	Percentage
Awareness of prevention of hepatitis	100	25.1%
Awareness of the management of hepatitis	23	5.08%
Taken hepatitis Vaccination	50	12.6%
Have not taken Vaccination	175	43.9%
Can't say	2	0.01
Total	350	100

Source: Survey, 2021

It is clear from the above table that while 100 respondents representing 25.1% of the entire study are aware of the preventive measures to take against hepatitis, 23(5.08%) are aware of the management strategies of hepatitis and only 50(12.6%) have taken hepatitis vaccine. 175 representing 43.9% of the respondents have not been vaccinated, and 2 are not sure of their position.

Research Question four; What Level of Importance did the Respondent Accord the Campaign Messages on Hepatitis. The question evaluating the level of importance of the messages of the campaign reads; do you think the message on Hepatitis is important to you?

Table 5: analysis of the level of importance the respondents accord the messages about Hepatitis

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	282	71%
No	18	5.42%
Can't say	50	12.6%
Total	350	100

Source: Survey, 2021

The above table clearly states that 282(71%) of the respondents perceive the messages as important to them while 18(5.42%) see the messages as unimportant and 50(12.6%) are not sure of the importance of the messages on Hepatitis.

Research Question Five: what measures the respondents have put in place to guard against contacting Hepatitis using the acquired knowledge about the virus? This was captured in the questionnaire thus; how often the respondents practice what they learnt from the information?

Table 6: Evaluation of the Level of Application of Acquired knowledge about Hepatitis

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	23	5.8%
Often	40	10.0%
Occasional	30	7.6%
seldom	152	38.1%
Never	105	26.45
Total	350	100

Source: survey, 2021

It is clear from the above table that 23(5.85) of the respondent practice what they learnt very often, 40(10.0%) often, 30(7.6%) occasionally observe what they learnt, 152(38.1%) hardly practice the lessons from the campaign messages while 105(26.4%) never gave it a thought to practice the lessons media messages

Summary of findings

In line with the data collected from the 400 respondents who were used in this study, it was discovered that majority of people in Ebonyi state are fully aware of the health challenges of hepatitis. Although on area of screening and taking precautionary measures, majority of the respondents have not gone for hepatitis screening to know their status while some are not aware of the risk involved in exposing themselves to the virus.

Some of the respondents who have knowledge of the hepatitis virus claimed they were informed by health workers during seminars, workshops and health education lectures and that the media do not have constant and elaborate education on the virus as it is the case of other health emergencies like Covid-19, HIV, Tuberculosis. This study has also revealed from the reviews that most of the media campaigns were done during coverage of activates organised by professional bodies and NGOs which normally comes occasionally and not routinely as part of the major programmes schedules.

This study has confirmed the findings of an earlier study carried out by the World Health Organisation in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health FMOH in August 2017, entitled ‘Nigeria Employs Numerous Strategies to create Awareness on Viral Hepatitis in Nigeria, which was meant to educate and sensitize the masses on the causes, prevention and curative measures of hepatitis virus. The study revealed that some states in Nigeria namely, Lagos, Bauchi, Rivers and Nassarawa developed strategic plans for the treatment training and other means of dealing with the disease, while recommending that the Federal Government of Nigeria should be committed to make available hepatitis and treatment services in all healthcare facilities nationwide. The above findings show that Ebonyi is still lagging behind in the fight against hepatitis virus.

In a similar findings by Adesina,Oyero, Okorie, Amodu,Adeyeye and Omole in 2020, in a study titled ‘Assessment of health communication practice on hepatitis B in the South-West Nigeria’ show that some residents of the south west Nigeria preferred the internet, as health communication source for Hepatitis information as against traditional means of television, radio, and print media. The study recommended that awareness and public enlightenment are needed to educate the masses on hepatitis and other related diseases associate with it.

Conclusion

The researcher through the literature reviews carried out in this study and the use of primary sources of data, in form of focus group discussions and in-depth oral interviews conducted with residents in Ebonyi state has really proved that the impact of the media campaign on hepatitis in Ebonyi state have not been fully felt as the masses are yet to imbibe the habit of taking precautionary measures to avert the dreaded hepatitis disease. Though the media have embarked on wide range of public enlightenment and awareness campaigns in different parts of the country including Ebonyi state, more campaign against the hepatitis virus mode of transmission and preventive measures need to be carried out in the state.

Recommendations

The researcher hereby made the following recommendation for policy formulation and for further studies, they include:

1. The media need to embark on a more aggressive campaign on hepatitis in Ebonyi state.
2. There is need for government to sponsor media campaigns which will involve both mainstream and new media technologies, since more people rely on social media for their information.
3. There is need to study the target audience and package campaign strategies to meet the need of the different categories of consumers of media messages on hepatitis.
4. Media public enlightenment and awareness campaign should not be left for NGOs and professional bodies alone but should be a major government programme on arresting the health challenges of hepatitis.
5. Further studies on the level of attitudinal change as a result of media campaign against the hepatitis virus in Ebonyi state should be carried out.

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