

Healthcare Seeking Behavior among Women Attending Primary Healthcare Facilities in Kuje Area Council Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council in Abuja, Nigeria. Descriptive research design was adopted with the population which consisted of 3,500 women attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area council. A sample size of 385 was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. A self-structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.736 was used for data collection. Data collected were coded and analyzed with the aid of statistical product for service solution (SPSS) version 25.0, using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and regression at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that the respondents had positive attitude towards healthcare seeking ($\bar{X} = 2.96 \pm 0.83$), and the relationship between attitude and healthcare-seeking behavior among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was high ($r = 0.98$, $R^2 = 0.96.3$). It was concluded that mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja had positive attitude towards healthcare seeking. It was recommended that healthcare workers should help uphold the positive attitude found by emphasizing the benefits of seeking healthcare for women during their clinical visits to primary healthcare facilities.

Keywords: attitude; healthcare seeking; mothers; primary healthcare facilities

INTRODUCTION

Inappropriate attitude toward healthcare seeking can be detrimental to health and aggravate morbidity and mortality among mothers. According to [1] one explanation for poor health outcomes among women is the negative attitude of mothers towards modern healthcare services. Also, [2] posits that when attitude towards healthcare is considered to be poor by the user, seeking of services is likely to be negatively impacted. Moreover, negative attitudes and behaviors could undermine the effectiveness of maternal and infant health promotion efforts [3]. Attitudes and behavior toward healthcare seeking are important determinants of maternal and infant health outcomes [4]. The report by [5] showed that, over the last three decades, Nigeria continues to have one of the highest maternal mortality ratios, with 496–560 deaths per 100,000 live births. This scenario was expected to increase the rate of seeking healthcare services by mothers, but the reverse is the case. The 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey reported that only 18% of pregnant women had the first antenatal visit in the first trimester of pregnancy while 34% did not receive any antenatal care. This is indicative of poor health-seeking practice, which could be influenced by several factors including socioeconomic status and location.

In a study in Nigeria, as many as 71% of rural dwellers have reported inappropriate health seeking behavior (HSB) during their last illness episode, as compared to 53% of urban dwellers [6]. This disparity suggests that several factors could influence the attitude and healthcare-seeking behavior of mothers. The study of [7] showed that, the odds that mothers with secondary school education and above would 0.44 times most likely seek modern health care than those with no education (AOR: 0.44; 95% CI [0.23, 0.86]). While caregivers within age ≥ 28 years are 1.65 times more likely to seek health care from modern service providers than those within age ≤ 27 years (AOR: 1.65; 95% CI [1.02, 2.68]). The 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey reported a huge disparity between urban and rural dwellers in antenatal clinic visits in the first trimester of pregnancy (23% versus 15%). Despite the provision of primary healthcare facilities both in rural and urban areas.

Primary health incorporates preventive, promotive, rehabilitative, and curative care with an emphasis on prevention. For this level to thrive, the communities must be involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the system in line with the Alma Ata Declaration [8]. A report by [9] showed that 70% of all ailments could be treated at the primary care level and just 20% need to get to the secondary level while 5% to the tertiary level. However, primary healthcare, which is supposed to be the bedrock of the country's health care system, is currently catering for less than 20% of the potential patients; while some of the healthcare cases are handled at home majorly by mothers.

Even though some common illnesses can be successfully managed at home if recognized early, facilitation of mothers' attitude towards care-seeking remains a challenge today [10]. A large number of children die without ever reaching a health facility [11]. This is indicative of negative attitude towards healthcare seeking by mothers; which according to [12] leads to health complications that

make medical care to be ineffective. Therefore, appropriate attitude towards healthcare seeking is an important motherhood instrument for preventing morbidity and mortalities.

The attitude of mothers towards seeking professional healthcare is becoming a source of concern among healthcare professionals working in the facilities in Kuje area. This is because it is slowing down the efforts made to improve maternal health because it is associated with poor utilization of healthcare services and late presentation of illnesses which are all detrimental to health [13]. The attitude of mother towards healthcare seeking cannot be ignored in any effort geared towards the enhancement of maternal health in any region, including Abuja. Therefore, this study was focused on the attitude and healthcare seeking behaviour among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council in Abuja, Nigeria. The following research questions were stated to guide the study. What is the:

1. Attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja?
2. Relationship between socio-economic status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja?
3. Relationship between educational status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja?
4. Relationship between religious affiliation and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja?
5. Relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behaviour among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja?

The following hypotheses were stated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 alpha level:

1. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja
2. There is no significant relationship between educational status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja.
3. There is no significant relationship between religious affiliation and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja
4. There is no significant relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behaviour among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was adopted with a population that consisted of 3,500 women attending primary health care facilities in Kuje Area council. A sample size of 385 was selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. A self-structured questionnaire titled: Attitude towards Health Seeking Questionnaire (AHSQ) with a reliability coefficient of 0.736 was used for data collection. Face and content validity of the instrument was established by constructing the questions in line with the study objectives, then presenting the instruments to the supervisor and three (3) other experts in the Department of Human Kinetic, Health and Safety Studies to access and certify that the items were relevant to the area of research. Comments, suggestions and recommendations made were carefully studied and used to improve the quality of the instrument as well as the entire study. Data was collected by a face-to-face administration of the instrument to the respondents. Data collected were coded and analyzed with the aid of statistical product for service solution (SPSS) version 25.0, using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and regression at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below:

Table 4.1: Mean and standard deviation on attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja

SN	Items	\bar{X}	S.D.	Decision
1	It is important for mothers to seek healthcare when the need arise	3.71	.48	Positive
2	Seeking care in a healthcare facility is the best for mothers	3.57	.55	Positive
3	It is not really necessary that women should seek for care from a skilled healthcare providers	2.80	.98	Positive
4	A mother can seek for care in a healthcare facility when she likes	3.19	.58	Positive
5	A mother don't need the doctor's or nurse's recommendation before seeking for care	2.71	.73	Positive

6	A mother can only go to health facility when she is very ill	2.77	1.06	Positive
7	Going to health facility to seek care is waste of time and money	2.81	1.05	Positive
8	Can seek for care from a trained healthcare professional only when there is serious reproductive health problem	2.80	.98	Positive
9	Going to the healthcare facility just for check-up is not an important reason to seek for healthcare	2.96	.87	Positive
10	The results advice and prescription of healthcare providers are not reliable at all	2.81	.92	Positive
11	Can't seek for care at the healthcare facility because of too many protocols	2.73	.84	Positive
12	There is no need to seek professional advice from healthcare practitioners provided I don't have any sign or symptom of sickness	2.67	.96	Positive
	Grand mean	2.96	0.83	Positive

Criterion mean = 2.50

Table 4.1 revealed the mean and standard deviation on attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers. The result showed that the respondents had positive attitude as the grand mean of 2.96 ± 0.83 was greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating a positive attitude. Thus, the attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was positive.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression analysis on relationship between socio-economic status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending in Kuje Area Council

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p-value	Decision
1	.887	.786	.784	386.11	.00*	H ₀ rejected

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 2 showed that there was a high positive relationship between socio-economic status and attitude towards healthcare seeking ($r = 0.88$). The result further showed that socio-economic status contributed 78.6% of the variance in the attitude towards healthcare seeking ($R^2 = 0.786$) and there was a statistically significant relationship between socio-economic status and attitude towards healthcare seeking [$F = 386.11$, $p < 0.05$]. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was rejected.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression analysis on relationship between educational status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending in Kuje Area Council

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p-value	Decision
1	.953	.908	.907	977.73	.00*	H ₀ rejected

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 3 showed that there was a high positive relationship between educational status and attitude towards healthcare seeking ($r = 0.953$). The result further showed that educational status contributed 90.8% of the variance in the attitude towards health seeking ($R^2 = 0.908$) and there was a statistically significant relationship between educational status and attitude towards healthcare seeking [$F = 977.73$; $p < 0.05$]. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between educational status and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was rejected.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression analysis on the relationship between religion and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending in Kuje Area Council

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p-value	Decision
1	.924	.853	.852	621.97	.00*	H ₀ rejected

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 4 showed that there was a high positive relationship between religion and attitude toward healthcare seeking ($r = 0.924$). The result further showed that religion contributed 85.3% of the variance in the attitude towards healthcare seeking ($R^2 = 0.853$) and there was a statistically significant relationship between religion and attitude towards healthcare seeking ($F = 621.97$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between religion and attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was rejected.

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression analysis on the relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behavior among mothers attending in Kuje Area Council

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p-value	Decision
1	.981	.963	.962	2797.71	.00*	H ₀ rejected

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows the relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behaviors among mothers using simple linear regression analysis. The result of the study showed that there was a high positive relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behavior ($r = 0.98$). The result further showed that attitude contributed 96.3% of the variance in the healthcare seeking behaviors ($R^2 = 0.963$) and there was a significant relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behaviour ($F = 2797.71$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behaviors among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result showed that the respondents had positive attitude towards healthcare seeking ($\bar{X} = 2.96 \pm 0.83$). This finding may not be surprising because the study was carried out among mothers who probably have received several health talks at the facility which must have influenced their attitude towards healthcare seeking. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of [13] whose study on maternal healthcare seeking behavior in Enugu State, Southeast Nigeria showed a positive attitude towards healthcare seeking among mothers. The finding of this study also showed that the respondents had good healthcare seeking behavior towards antenatal care (3.32 ± 0.68). The finding of this study is in line with that of [14] whose study on healthcare seeking behavior in Ghana showed that a good proportion of the respondents had good healthcare seeking behavior. The finding of this study is akin to that of [15] whose study on maternal healthcare service seeking behaviors and associated factors among women in rural Haramaya District, Eastern Ethiopia revealed that women had good healthcare seeking behavior during antenatal care.

The finding of this study is consistent with that of [16] whose study on healthcare seeking behavior in Southwest Ethiopia showed good healthcare seeking behavior. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of [13] whose study on maternal healthcare seeking behavior in Enugu State, Southeast Nigeria showed a good healthcare seeking behavior among the respondents. The finding of this study is at variance with that of [17] whose study on the determinants of healthcare seeking behavior during pregnancy in Ogun State, Nigeria showed that respondents had poor healthcare seeking behaviour with preference for traditional providers. The finding of this study corroborates that of [18] whose study in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria showed poor healthcare seeking behavior generally. The similarity found between the previous studies and the present one might be due to the homogeneity of the study population.

The result of this study showed that the relationship between attitude and healthcare seeking behavior among mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja was high. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of [13] whose study on maternal healthcare seeking behavior in Enugu State, Southeast Nigeria showed that respondents had a positive attitude and good behavior towards healthcare seeking among mothers. The finding of the study is in line with that of [19] whose study on healthcare seeking behaviors of mother having under 24 months old child attending Outpatient Department of Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Kathmandu showed that, majority of mothers had good healthcare seeking behaviour and positive behavior towards seeking healthcare in government owned health facilities. This similarity found between the previous studies and the present one might be attributed to the similarities in the study populations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, mothers attending primary healthcare facilities in Kuje Area Council, Abuja had positive attitude towards healthcare seeking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Healthcare workers should help uphold the positive attitude found by emphasizing the benefits of seeking healthcare for women during their clinical visits to the primary healthcare facilities.
2. The ministry of health should make delivery services free for mothers, this will help to encourage women to continue with the good healthcare seeking behavior towards delivery care.
3. Non-governmental organizations who are interested in upholding maternal health should carryout interventions aimed at reducing unemployment rate, increasing literacy rate, and improving the socioeconomic status of mothers as these were found to have influence on the healthcare seeking behavior of mothers.

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