AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF MARKET WOMEN TOWARDS COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak that originated in Wuhan, China has resulted into a pandemic which prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare a public health emergency across the continent. In order to reduce the spread of this virus, the Nigerian Government ordered the closure of some states in the country but allowed only the market women to operate on designated days so that citizens can stock foodstuff and food items in their homes. This study was therefore designed to examine knowledge and attitude of market women towards prevention, spread and control of COVID-19 disease in Ijebu-North Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design of the expo-facto type was employed while market women in the two major markets of the selected local government were purposively selected as the study population. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 500 market women in the two markets while a validated questionnaire with Cronbach alpha 0.86 was used as the research instrument. A total of 500 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the market women by the researchers between 7.00am - 2.00pm on 5 consecutive market days when partial movement of people and goods were allowed. Out of 500, only 432 copies were found usable which accounted for 86.4% response rate. Data analysis was carried out using simple percentages, regression, ANCOVA and t-test at 0.05 level

Findings revealed Radio (92.6%), religious/worship centres (81.5%) and Television (64.8%) are the major sources of awareness of COVID-19 and related information among the market women. Findings also revealed that majority of the sampled market women had low or poor knowledge of COVID-19 pandemic and related information. The market women surveyed also displayed moderate attitude towards

prevention and control of COVID-19 amongst other findings. Recommendations were proffered include sensitization and provision of COVID-19 information in various dialects by media and health personnel; provision of protective materials by the government and broadcasting of COVID-19 interviews with recovered individuals, recordings of infected persons in agony and probably recordings of those that died as a result of the disease.

Keywords: COVID-19, Disposition of market women to COVID-19 disease, Knowledge of COVID-19, Prevention and control of COVID-19 disease, Nigeria

Background to the Study

Coronavirus disease 2019 shortened as COVID-19 which originated in Wuhan, China became known to people across the world as a result of total lock downs experienced with the intent to curb the spread of the Virus. Daily broadcasts on Televisions, Radios, social media channels and information obtained from posters, handbills and at group meetings, campaigns, political or opinion leaders and worship places occasioned people's awareness, reality and severity of the outbreak (Mbaduwe, 2020). In addition, increases in count of confirmed cases and death on a daily basis around the world made governments, organizations and individuals including, the young, adults and the aged; literates and non-literate, rich and the poor more concerned about the severity of the incidence.

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in early December, 2019 in Wuhan where a cluster of pneumonia with unknown cause was identified by the Chinese authorities (Holshue et al., 2020). The Virus spreads its tentacles across the whole world and at alarming level of severity; and as such has been regarded as pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020) occurring in over 200 countries within a span of five (5) months. According to Donlop, Howe, Li & Allen (2020), COVID-19 usually causes respiratory illness, ranging from common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS); with sufferers experiencing difficulty in breathing and bilateral pulmonary infiltrates seen through chest X-ray; results into instant death within 14 days of infection. Abbag, El-Mekki, Al Bshabshe, Mahfouz, Al-Dosry, Mirdad and Abbag (2018) affirmed that COVID-19 in human beings eventually lead to death, if not reported on time for prompt and proper medical attention to take place.

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COVID-19 spreads through contact with respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing and through close personal contact with infected surfaces and touching or shaking infected hands (Assiri, et al, 2013). The authors also identified its symptoms as fever, cough, shortness of breath and abnormal chest radiograph amongst others. Al-Mohrej, Al-Shirian, Al-Otaibi, Tamim, Masuadi and Fakhoury (2016) affirmed that majority of Saudi residents were aware that use of hand sanitizers, avoidance of crowded places, wearing of masks in public places curtailed the spread of the Virus just like the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Okafor and Adebola (2020) shared the view that the spread of COVID-19 could be controlled by discouraging direct person to person contact especially with infected individuals and noted that this requires proper mass sensitization through different media. World Health Organisation (2017) recommended urgent need for isolation of patients that have come down with the disease and for critically ill patients, airborne precautions are recommended in order to prevent community transmission of the disease.

Between March 3rd to 14th, 2020, confirmed cases globally rose from 90, 807 to 142,539 (specifically within 11 days) in 135 countries with China alone having about 57% of reported cases and 5,393 deaths making a total of in the world. In Africa, on the other hand, 26 out of 54 countries reported cases of COVID-19, Nigeria inclusive (National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), 2020). The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was reported on the 27th of February 2020 by the Federal Ministry of Health in Lagos State, since its outbreak in December, 2019 at Wuhan in China (NCDC, 2020). By April 12th, 2020, the number of reported cases has risen to 493, 17 deaths, 159 discharged recovered and with over 5000 contact tracing (Channels TV Broadcast March, 2020). The high number of contact tracing suggests daily increase in the number of confirmed cases in the country and there is the possibility of community transmission if urgent attention and prompt interventions are not taken into consideration.

With these alarming trends of daily increases, the Federal Government of Nigeria on March 30th, 2020 ordered total lockdown of some states where cases of COVID-19 were prominent. Unfortunately, Ogun State was listed among those infected states. In order to curb the spread of this deadly disease and reduce stress on citizens as a result of the lockdown, governments across the globe are giving out cash or kinds in form of food items to serve as palliative to citizenry. In Nigeria for example, the federal and state governments adopted several means, such as, use of Radio, Television, songs, talks and jingles either stating or describing the symptoms, prevention, dangers or implications of

the disease on the society. Governments and health personnel have also sensitized the public on identification of symptoms, prevention as well as what are expected of individuals whenever COVID-19 cases occur (NCDC, 2020). Similarly, government, media houses, medical personnel and individuals' initiatives has promoted personal hygiene, washing of hands, use of hand sanitizers, physical distancing and other preventive measures. Help lines, in cases of emergency and lockdowns in various states of the Federation have been implemented. These strategies have been made possible through catchy and colorful programmes broadcasted by media houses and various social media channels.

In addition, in recognition of the fact that government palliatives cannot cover everyone and that citizen, including the self-employed, artisans and traders do not suffer hunger, the government ordered markets where food items are sold to be opened to citizens who might need to stock their homes with foodstuff and other household items do so during the lock down. It is therefore worrisome as the incubation period of the COVID-19 is between 2-14 days and citizens have been compelled to stay in door in order to curtail the spread of the deadly virus. The foodstuff markets are opened between 7.00am to 2.00pm on days approved by the government. This implies that the lives of market women and individuals wanting to buy food items become insecure as physical interaction is enhanced vis-à-vis the contagious rates of the virus along with facts of contact tracings that are yet to be captured and isolated but still walking freely on the Nigerian streets and market places (NCDC, 2020). These situations portend little level of awareness and knowledge of COVID-19 among the Nigerian populace.

Before February 27, 2020 (that is, before the outbreak of COVID-19) in Nigeria, many citizens were of the perceptions that COVID-19 is a white man's disease and that it cannot survive in Nigeria. Some citizens think that the disease has to do with the wealthy or rich persons; better still some others perceived that the Nigerian climate will suppress the virus, even, if it gets into the country. Not until February 27 when Nigeria reported its first case of COVID-19 which since then has gradually been increasing at an alarming rate on a daily basis. Even at this, some Nigerians still believe that the government is only playing pranks and that the government officials were only looking for means to steal public funds. The lack of studies of these kinds among residents, particularly, among medical and media personnel as well as information scientists indicate that more research need to be conducted to look at citizen's level of awareness, knowledge, attitudes and perceptions towards prevention and control of Covid-19in

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Nigeria. The current study sets out to identify level of awareness, knowledge and attitude towards prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic among the market women in Nigeria. The essence of this study is to come up with proactive measures that will improve level of awareness, knowledge and attitudes towards making Nigeria COVID-19-free. As at the time of reporting this study, the major information disseminated across all media channels is on COVID-19 incidences both at local and international levels. Hence the need for a study of this kind to assess market women's level of knowledge and attitude to prevention of spread of COVID-19 and proffer recommendations that could assist in solving the challenges. It is against these backdrops that the current study examined knowledge of and attitude of market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria towards prevention and control of COVID-19.

This study will therefore not only add to body of knowledge on COVID-19 pandemic at international level but also at national level and Ogun State in particular. It will also serve as a guide or reference for other intending researchers both within and outside the country. The study will equally serve to inform not only the market women but also the entire Nigerian populace and the outside world on the need to utilize media, particularly, the electronic media to get more life-saving information and knowledge on COVID-19 and other vital information.

Literature Review

Literature on awareness, knowledge and attitude of people towards prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic are scanty both local and international levels. Notwithstanding, Giao, Han, Khanh, Ngan, Tam and An (2020) examined knowledge and attitudes of healthcare workers at District 2 Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City toward COVID-19. The study discovered that majority of the healthcare workers had good knowledge and positive attitude towards control of COVID-19. The findings further revealed a significant correlation between knowledge of COVID-19 and attitude towards COVID-19 among the healthcare workers. Zhong, Luo, Li, Zhang, Liu, Li, and Li (2020) investigated Chinese residents' knowledge and perception towards COVID-19 during the period of rapid rise of the outbreak. The study discovered that the respondents were knowledgeable of, and displayed good attitude towards the control of the pandemic. Findings also indicated that majority of the respondents signified that they wore masks when going out in recent days. It was also discovered that COVID-19 knowledge was significantly associated with attitudes and preventive practices towards COVID-2019.

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Modi,Nair, Uppe, Modi, Tuppekar, Gharpure and Langade (2020) assessed level of awareness of COVID-19 and related infection control practices among healthcare professionals and students in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. According to them, the overall awareness for all subgroups was adequate with mean score of 71.2% reporting correct answers. The highest percentage of correct responses was from undergraduate medical students while the lowest was from non-clinical/administrative staff. Less than half of the respondents could correctly define close contact. Further, more than three-fourths of the responders were aware of various infection control measures, like, rapid triage, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and having a separate, well-ventilated waiting area for suspected COVID-19 patients. However, only 45.4% of the respondents were aware of the correct procedure in using a mask or respirator and only 52.5% were aware of the preferred hand hygiene method for visibly soiled hands.

Ipinnimo et al. (2022) assessed the knowledge of COVID-19 and practice of preventive measures in Nigeria. It was gathered that over 90% of the respondents had a good knowledge of the disease . similarly, it was also found that the internet was their major source information about Covid-19. However, finding further revealed that only about 57.6% of the respondents had good practice of preventive measures of the disease.

Reuben, Danladi , Saleh and Ejemb (2021) investigated the knowledge, attitudes and practices towards COVID-19 in Nigeria. The empirical result indicated that respondents had good knowledge of COVID-19, gained mainly through the internet/social media and Television. In terms of attitude, findings indicated that majority of the respondents of about 8% had positive attitudes toward the adherence to Covid-19 guideline by government. Findings further indicated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge of COVID-19 and attitude towards preventive measures.

Shallie and Haffejee (2022) evaluated Nigerian university students' knowledge, attitudes and behavior (KAB) towards COVID-19. Findings showed that the undergraduates revealed good knowledge of COVID-19. In addition, findings indicated that knowledge significantly influence participant attitude towards Covid-19. Moreso, Oripeloye, Osinowo, Ajuwon and Ladipo (2022) investigated the knowledge, attitude and adherence to practice of COVID-19 prevention-protocols in Nigeria. It was gathered that there is positive relationship between knowledge of COVID-19 and attitude to guidelines and adherence to COVID-19 prevention-protocols. Not only that, findings

also indicted that participant had good knowledge of Covid-19 disease as well as positive attitude towards prevention.

Equally, Nwagbara et al. (2021) examined the knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and preventive practices towards COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa. The result of the empirical study indicated that participants had a positive attitude towards COVID-19. Similarly, they also display good practices towards COVID-19. Consequently, Orok, Ndem and Daniel (2022) examined the knowledge, attitude and perception of medical students on COVID-19 vaccines. The cross-sectional web-based survey which was conducted among undergraduate students indicated that the student had good ' knowledge as well as positive perceptions towards covid-19 vaccine.

Consequently Lawal, Bello, Yakubu, Ibrahim and Rabiu (2022) appraised the knowledge, attitude, perception and practices among northern Nigerians in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The result of the descriptive and inferential statistics indicated respectively that the northerners have a high level of knowledge, attitude, perception and practice about COVID-19 outbreak and there was also a strong positive relationship between knowledge, attitude, perception and practice towards adherence to covid- 19 guidelines in terms of prevention and control. .

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study seeks to:

  i. identify sources of information about COVID-19 disease among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

  ii. find out level of awareness of COVID-19 information among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

  iii. find out level of knowledge of COVID-19 information among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

  iv. examine attitudes of market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria towards prevention and control of COVID-19.

  v. Make recommendations on prevention of the spread of Covid-19 among market women and the general populace

Research Methodology

This study adopted survey research design of expo-facto type. The study population comprised market women in two major markets in Ijebu north local government of Ogun State, Nigeria: (1) Ago-Iwoye Market, and (2) Ijebu-Igbo Market. The purposive sampling technique was employed to consider only women in these two

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major markets. In each of the market, 250 market women were randomly selected to make a total sample of 500 in all. A structured questionnaire named, 'Market Women COVID-19 Response Scale' (MWC-19RS) was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A is the demographic scale. Section B is 'Market Women COVID-19 Awareness Scale' and consisted of 10 items that indicated media used in conveying COVID-19 information to people. Section C is the 'Market Women COVID-19 Knowledge Scale' and it comprised 8 items on knowledge of COVID-19 information while the last section, Section D is 'Market Women COVID-19 Attitude Scale'. It is a 10-item scale that measured attitudes of market women towards prevention and control of COVID-19 disease.

The questionnaire was validated by four experts in Department of Educational Management and Business Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria. A test-re-test of the questionnaire was conducted on 30 market women in Bodija Market in Oyo State, Nigeria and a Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.86 was reported. With this high index, 500 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 250 market women in Ago-Iwoye Market and 250 market women in Ijebu-Igbo Market with the help of five (5) research assistants during the accessible periods the State is on lock down. Meanwhile, literate market women responded to the items by themselves while the non-literate market women were assisted by the research assistants by asking them the questions and filling in their responses. Out of the 500 questionnaires, only 432 copies were retrieved and found usable which accounted for 86.4% response rate. The data collected was analyzed with the aid of SPSS version 21.0 for windows using simple percentages, Regression analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and T-test at 0.05 levels of significance.

Findings and Discussions

This sub-section presents the results based on the objectives and hypotheses formulated for the study.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group		
Below 30 years	24	5.6
30-40 years	136	31.5
41-50 years	80	18.5
Above 50 years	192	44.4
Total	**432**	**100.0**
Religious Affiliation		
Muslim	144	33.3
Christian	288	66.7
Total	**432**	**100.0**

Table 1 revealed demographic information of respondents by age and religious affiliation. Findings showed that majority of the respondents were above 50 years of age followed by respondents aged 30-40 years with the least age group being 30 years or below. On the other hand, majority (66.7%) were Christian while 33.3% were Muslim.

Objective one: To identify sources of information about COVID-19 disease among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Respondents main sources of awareness about COVID-19 Disease

S/N	Sources of Information	Yes	No	Remark
1	Radio	400(92.6%)	32(7.4%)	Aware
2	Religious/Worship Centres	352(81.5%)	80(18.5%)	Aware
3	Television	280(64.8%)	152(35.2%)	Aware
4	Group Meetings	248(57.4%)	184(42.6%)	Aware
5	Internet and social media applications	120(27.9%)	312(72.2%)	Not aware
6	Local Govt. Public Health Campaign	56(13.0%)	376(87.0%)	Not aware
7	Political/Opinion Leaders	40(9.3%)	392(90.7%)	Not aware
8	Newspaper/magazine	40(9.3%)	392(90.7%)	Not aware
9	Posters/Handbill	8(1.9%)	424(98.1%)	Not aware
10	Bill Board	0 (0.0%)	432(100.0%)	Not aware
11	Public Libraries	0 (0.0%)	432(100.0%)	Not aware

The respondents were asked to indicate channels through which they got aware of COVID-19 information using the 11 constructs presented in Table 2. Respondents indicated Radio (400) (92.6%), religious/worship places (352) (81.8%) and Television (280) (64.8%) as major sources or channels of awareness about COVID-19. The least indicated were posters/handbills (8) (1.9%) as well as billboards and public libraries (0) (0.0%). Findings thus revealed that the market women were aware of COVID-19 through Radio, religious/worship centres and Television.

Objective Two: To find out the level of awareness of COVID-19 disease among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Respondents Level of Awareness of COVID-19 Disease

S/N	Statements	Yes	No	Remark
1	Symptoms of COVID-19 include: continuous sneezing, dry cough, fever, difficulty in breathing and Pneumonia.	376(87.0%)	56(13.0%)	Highly Aware
2	COVID-19 is deadly. It has killed many people across the world.	336(77.8%)	96(22.2%)	Highly Aware
3	COVID-19 can be contacted through physical contact, such as, shaking of hands and hugging an infected person	304(70.4%)	128(29.6%)	Highly Aware
4	COVID-19 can be managed if promptly reported	160(37.0%)	272(63.0%)	Not Aware
5	COVID-19 has no vaccine for now	128(29.9%)	304(70.4%)	Not Aware
6	Elderly are more prone to death more than the younger ones	120(27.8%)	312(72.2%)	Not Aware
7	Not every hospital can treat COVID-19	120(27.8%)	312(72.2%)	Not Aware
8	COVID-19 destroys the immune system of the affected patient	56(13.0%)	376(87.0%)	Not Aware
	Mean	**200(46.3%)**	**232 (53.7%)**	Not Aware

Results revealed that respondents were not aware about the severity of COVID-19 disease (Table 3a). This was reflected in the data as 376 (87.0%) were aware of the destructive nature of the virus on the immune system of infected patients; 336 (77.8%) knew that COVID-19 is deadly and 304 (70.4%) were aware of its transmission. Less than one third, (56) or (13.0%) were aware of the severity of the damages the virus causes to the body. The import of these findings is that less than half of the respondents were aware of information pertaining to symptoms, severity and transmission of the Covid - 19 disease.

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Objective Three: To find out the level of knowledge of COVID-19 disease among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Respondents level of knowledge of COVID-19 Disease

Level of Knowledge	Scoring	Frequency	Percentage
Very Low	Less than 1	32	7.4
Low	2-3	184	42.6
Fair	4-5	144	33.3
High	6-7	40	9.3
Very High	8	32	7.4
Total		**432**	**100.0**

In ascertaining the market women's level of knowledge of COVID-19 and information relating to it, responses of each of the participant were scored all over 8 and ranked as presented in Table 3b. Majority 184(42.6%) scored between 2-3 marks which was ranked low knowledge; 40 (9.3%) of them scored between 6-7 marks which was ranked high knowledge marks and only 32(7.4%) scored 8 and was ranked very high knowledge of COVID-19. Going by these values, one can infer that majority of the market women had poor understanding and unarguably poor knowledge of COVID-19 disease despite the fact that they were aware of COVID-19. Majority do not have knowledge of its severity.

Objective four: To examine attitude of market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria towards prevention and control of COVID-19 disease.

Table 5: Respondents attitudes towards prevention and control of COVID-19 disease

S/N	Statements: During this COVID-19 pandemic:	Yes	No
1	I wash my hand with soup regularly	344(76.6%)	88(20.9%)
2	I do not attend any form of social and religious gathering	272(63.0%)	160(37.0%)
3	I maintain physical distancing as often as possible as demonstrated by media	264(61.1%)	168(38.9%)
4	I disassociate myself from hand shaking and hugging with anyone	240(55.6%)	192(44.4%)
5	I apply hand sanitizer at regular interval	208(48.1%)	224(51.9%)
6	Any time I notice anyone coughing or sneezing, I take serious precautionary measures	192(44.4%)	240(55.6%)
7	I always avoid touching my eye, noise and ear at this time	192(44.4%)	240(55.6%)
8	I do not allow visitor(s) in my house during this period	144(33.3%)	288(66.7%)
9	I do not attend to more than one customer at a time while in the market	96(22.2%)	336(77.8%)
10	I always use nose and mouth covers as well as gloves while in market	48(11.1%)	384(88.9%)
	Mean	**200(45.98%)**	**232(53.77%)**

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Respondents were asked to indicate their attitudes to prevention and control of COVID-19 as presented in Table 4a. The data analyzed indicated that 344(76.6%) washed their hands with soap regularly;272 (63.0%) refrained themselves from social and religious gathering and 264(61.0%) maintained physical distance. 272. Few of them96(22.2%) obeyed attending to one customer at a time and only 48 (11.1%) used nose and mouth covers as well as hand gloves to protect themselves. Going by the mean score, 200(45.98%) had a positive attitude to prevention and control of the disease while 232(53.77%) had a negative attitude.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that Radio, places of worship and Television constituted the main sources of awareness of information about COVID-19 among market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. This could be as a result of the fact that Radio is a mobile and hand-held device that can be moved about and listened to, at any time of the day and also provides vital information in various languages different tribes of market women can understand. Similarly, market women are members of Churches or Mosques who congregate and interact with each other thereby getting aware and knowledge of various things happening either within or outside the immediate surroundings. This finding was in agreement with report of Mbaduwe (2020) which stressed that media, such as, Radio, Television and worship centers made people aware of information on COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, finding of this study revealed that market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria had low or poor knowledge of COVID-19 pandemic and information related to its symptoms, causes, prevention and control. This probably was as a result of the fact that majority of the market women have not seen anyone in their vicinity that have died of the COVID-19. Not only that the market women perceived that the lockdown was really affecting their business activities as majority signified that they find it difficult. Majority expressed that the only thing that matters to them is to eat and that they were less concerned about COVID-19. In addition, some were of the opinion that COVID-19 is disease of the rich people. The finding also indicated that even though, the market women got aware of information relating to COVID-19 through radio, places of worship and through television, majority of them did not take cognizance of the information. The market women were pre-occupied with their buying and selling activities. This finding is at variance with the finding of Zhong et al (2020)

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which revealed that Chinese residents were highly knowledgeable of COVID-19 information and its implications.

In addition, findings also indicated the market women in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State possessed moderate attitude towards prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic. Moderate attitude arose probably because of the market women low or poor level of knowledge of information and severity of COVID-19 disease. This is because it is only when the concepts are understood that receivers can actually analyze, synthesize and evaluate information received to make either better choice and decisions for sustainability of lives and self-empowerment. It is perceived that Radio is an audio media which relay information only through sound and the listeners get the message by making use of the hearing sense. Similarly, individuals obtained information in places of worship, through face-to-face interaction. Television is expected to give more accurate information through simultaneous use of sight and hearing senses. In most cases, the use of Television is limited by non- availability of light coupled with availability of funds to purchase television by market women and their busy nature thereby having little or no time to watch or listen to the Television programs and broadcasts.

In spite the fact that the market women surveyed had good knowledge of the fact that COVID-19 disease kills within 14 days, they still failed to take necessary precautions, such as, use of noise and mouth covers and gloves, use of hand sanitizers regularly and attending to one customer at a time. In addition, the market women failed to take precautionary measures when someone coughed or sneezed near them because they believed that coughing and sneezing is common among people even before COVID-19 pandemic. This finding is at variance with the finding of Zhong et al (2020) which revealed that Chinese residents had positive attitudes towards control of COVID-19. Findings were in line with that of Reuben, Danladi, Saleh and Ejemb (2021) and Lawal, Bello, Yakubu, Ibrahim and Rabiu (2022) who reported positive attitude towards Covid-19-guidelines

Conclusion

To better curtail the spread of Covid -19 virus among Nigerians and most especially among the market women, there is the need for more effective sensitization programmes to improve level of awareness and knowledge of the disease, prevention, symptoms and causes so as to quickly, efficiently and effectively eradicate COVID-19

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disease from Nigeria. This will also allow various categories of the Nigerian citizen go about their various activities and businesses. Sensitization programs could be done effectively via Radio, Television, YouTube, Facebook and other social media applications to improve the attitudinal change of people, particularly, market women towards curtailing the spread of COVID-19 disease.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

i. Radio and Television have been useful sources of information dissemination and awareness creation but information disseminated on COVID-19 disease have not been adequately understood by market women. There is thus the need to convey COVID-19 disease information in various dialects available in the country so that both the educated and non-educated, particularly, the market women can understand the messages better and become more aware and better educated about the severity, control and prevention of the disease.

ii. Media houses should capture and show real scenarios or events, pictures of or interviews with recovered individuals, recordings of infected persons in agony and probably recordings of those that died as a result of COVID-19 while blindfolding their faces. This probably will make citizen recognize that COVID-19 disease is real in Nigeria and might ginger them to keep to more safety cautions.

iii. Local Government health personnel should be encouraged and sensitized to take awareness campaigns to market places and streets in Nigeria so that everybody can be made more aware and knowledgeable about COVID-19 disease. This can serve to inform citizens that physical distancing, use of sanitizers, keeping in doors and other necessary precautions serious.

iv. Community/Market/Political leaders should be sensitized to educate people in their communities on the severity and prevention of spread of the disease.

v. The Governments at all levels should support citizens, including market women and even men in the provision of protective materials to shield individuals from contacting the virus.

vi. The federal government should engage in house-to-house sensitization programs and in doing this, every household should be provided with relief materials including money within the stipulated containment periods to encourage everyone stay in door, including the market women.

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vii. Finally, the public libraries should be stocked with relevant information materials, particularly COVID-19 disease related information (print, non-print, electronic and web-based information) so that people can consult them for needed and relevant information that might save people's lives.

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