



Research article

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Paucity of health information: an hindrance to utilization of eye care services by adult population of Yewa South Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background/Objective: The study was carried out to determine the utilization of orthodox eye care services by persons aged 40 years and above who were resident in Yewa South LGA of Ogun State, Nigeria. **Design/Methods:** It was a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out between February and April 2015. A multistage sampling method was used to select eligible participants in 4 randomly selected settlements in 4 randomly selected wards among the 10 wards in Yewa South LGA of Ogun State. **Results:** Level of utilization of eye care services among participants was only 45.8%. Age ≥ 70 years ($p=0.018$) and being educated ($p=0.019$) significantly increased the level of awareness and utilization of eye care services. Participants with previous eye symptoms (OR=6.20, CI: 3.71 - 10.38) had higher utilization of eye care services. **Conclusion:** The study showed that the level of awareness of eye care services is suboptimal as a result of paucity of health information. This accounts for low rate ($< 50\%$) of utilization of eye care services in Yewa-South local Government of Ogun State.

Keywords: Health information; patient education; eye care services; utilization; service availability

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INTRODUCTION

Utilization means exploration and making use of a facility or services¹. The factors affecting utilization of eye care services has been studied by different authors in different parts of the world. These factors hinge on lack of information [ignorance] availability, affordability, accessibility of eye care facilities and others^{2,3}. Assessment of the effective coverage of eye care services is an essential part of health care system performance measurement⁴. Various sociocultural factors have been reported to affect the utilization of health care services in urban areas^{5,6}. A systemic effort to produce good quality data on barriers to eye care utilization by rural dwellers is a prerequisite to designing locally suitable programs that aims at eradicating avoidable blindness⁷.

Over seventy percent of eye care personnel practice in urban area despite the fact that about

63% of Nigerian populations are rural dwellers⁸. The burden of blindness will likely be more in these rural areas. It is therefore very important that assessment of utilization of eye care services be undertaken in the rural populace if the situation is to be properly salvaged. Several efforts have been made to improve eye care services delivery to rural areas through periodic outreach program using eye care camps. This has reduced the burden of blindness a little. The numbers of people with blinding eye diseases that are not receiving appropriate eye care services at appropriate time are still quite large⁹. It is therefore essential to assess the various factors that affect the utilization of eye care services so that adequate measures to circumvent these barriers can be put in place. In addition understanding the factors affecting utilization of eye care services in the rural populace will aid in formulation of appropriate

strategies to reach the underserved people in the areas root¹⁰.

METHODS

Study setting:

The study was conducted between February and April 2015 in 4 randomly selected settlements in 4 randomly selected wards among the 10 wards in Yewa South LGA of Ogun State.

Study design:

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study.

Study population:

A total of 343 people aged 40 years above were recruited for the study. Male: 160 (46.7%) and female 183 (53.3%).

Sampling techniques

Multistage sampling technique was used to select the study population. The first stage of the sampling used 1991 census data for the local government to generate the name and numbers of settlement thus creating a sampling frame. Four out of ten wards in the local government area was selected from ten sample frame. The number of participants recruited from each ward was determined using the probability to proportional to size [PPS] modality based upon the population of the settlements. The second stage of the selection, a plastic cone was tossed at the entrance to the town determine the direction and the first house to start the data collection. Where there is no eligible individual, the subsequent house with eligible subjects was selected. In the last stage of the sampling, all eligible individuals aged 40 years and above who are residing in this local government area for at least one year were enumerated until the required number of participants calculated for the ward was obtained

Data collection tools:

Standard questionnaire was administered to all the participants and the information obtained including the biodata, presence of eye symptoms, information about the presence of eye care services in their environment, number of time that each participant has access the eye care centre,

barriers encountered in the course of accessing eye care services.

Data analysis and management:

Data obtained were analyzed using SPSS, a statistical computer program, version 16.0

RESULTS

A total of 345 people aged 40years and above were interviewed. Only 159 participants (46.1%) had knowledge of eye care facilities. Aged 70years and above (p=0.018) and being educated (p=0.001) significantly increased the level of awareness of eye care facility. Being a Christian (OR=1.29, CI; 0.82-2.02] and having a good knowledge of eye care services [OR 9.21 c2; 5.55-15.34] favoured increased utilization of eye care services. Considering age, sex, educational status and eye symptoms in a multiple regressing model, educational status was observed as the only significant predictor of knowledge of eye care services.

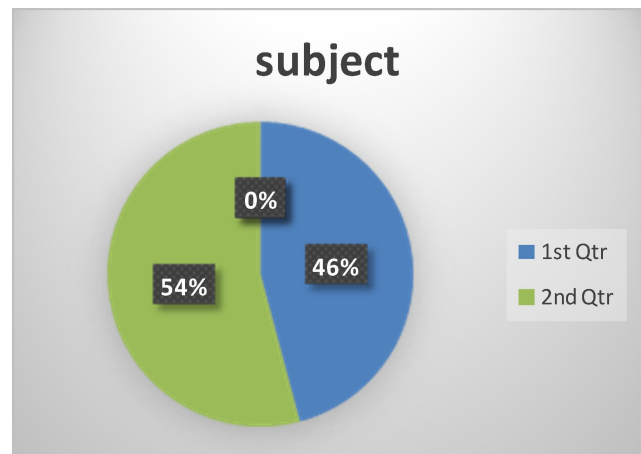


Fig 1: Bar chart showing awareness of eye care services

From the pie chart above, 54% had no knowledge of eye care services centre and 46% had knowledge of eye care services centre in the studied area.

Table 1: Multiple Regression analysis showing predictor of knowledge of eye care services

Parameter	B-	P value
Age	-0.003	0.961
Sex	-0.060	0.242
Educational Status	-0.362	0.000
Eye Symptoms	-0.042	0.371

B-multiple regression coefficient, P< 0.05 is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

There is paucity of knowledge about eye care services in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State. The level of awareness of eye care services centre is more in Ilaro which is the capital of the local government probably due to presence of State Specialist hospital within the town whereas, other communities lack similar privilege. Previous studies have reported paucity of knowledge about eye care services in many rural and semi urban communities in developing countries ^{2,3,7,10}. Deficient knowledge of eye care services among participants will adversely affect the rate of utilization of the services because awareness is a pre-requisite for utilization of eye care services. Setting up of a community base eye care delivery programmes will help to improve the accessibility, awareness and utilization of eye care services¹¹. It will correct the uneven distribution of eye care centres and eye care work force and circumvent the major barriers to uptake of eye care services.^{11,12}. Mass education and health information through different media such as radio, television and billboard will go a long way to keep people informed about eye diseases and guide them to accessible eye services centres.

Study limitations

First, the study was limited to outpatient clinics only and second; many patients could not complete the questionnaire on their own required the services of an interpreter.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that the level of awareness of eye care services is suboptimal as a result of paucity of health information and education. This accounts for low rate of utilization of eye care services in Yewa South local Government of Ogun State.

Recommendations

- i. Education of the community through mass media (Radio, Television) will improve awareness on available eye care services centres in the community.
- ii. Billboards and posters in town halls and conspicuous places will also improve awareness of eye care services utilization in Yewa South LGA of Ogun State.

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Conflict of interest

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