



HEALTH INFORMATION SOURCES AND CHALLENGES OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AMONG TRUCK DRIVERS IN MARABAR JOS AND TAFA STATIONS IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

By

ABUBAKAR, Sirajo Danzangi

University Library Complex
Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria
sabubakar1@fudutsinma.edu.ng

UMAR, Babangida Dangani Ph.D

Department of Library and Information Science
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
nadangani44@gmail.com

&

MOHAMMED, Habibu Ph.D

Sokowochin@gmail.com
Department of Library and Information Science
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract

This study examined the health information sources and challenges of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) among Truck Drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Two (2) objectives were formulated, which are; to identify the sources of Health Information that truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria use to get information for prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and to find out the challenges of accessing Health Information sources for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases among truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The research methodology adopted for the study was quantitative research methodology using a survey research design, the total population of the study comprised 75000 long-journey truck drivers plying Nigerian roads from which a sample of 382 truck drivers were drawn. Simple random sampling technique was used. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The study found out that Radio, Television, Friends, Internet and Handsets are used moderately. Newspapers, Billboards, and Mobilizations were found to be underutilized. While books, magazines, leaflets, journals and health pamphlets were totally out of use by truck drivers. It was also found that the major challenge to access of Sexual Health Information by truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria is non-availability of required information. It was recommended that more information sources that can be accessed and utilized easily should be adequately provided by NURTW, NATO, NACA, NATD to truckers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria. It was also recommended that more Health Information should be made available for truck drivers to use. More Health Information sources on STDs should be provided and made accessible for truckers to use.

Keywords: Challenges, Exploring, Health Information Sources, Prevention, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Truck drivers

Introduction

Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to

sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence (WHO, 2019). Sexual health has to do



with any measure taken to reduce the prevalence of sexual problems, sexually transmitted diseases rates, as well as reduce the high rate of unwanted pregnancy. Sexual health information is all about information on keeping yourself safer and healthy so you can enjoy positive sex and relation. It is all about information sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDs prevention and control, cervical screening, alcohol and drugs among others.

Sexual health is fundamental to the physical and emotional health and well-being of individuals, couples and families, and to the social and economic development of communities and countries. Sexual health, when viewed affirmatively, encompasses the rights of all persons to have the knowledge and opportunity to pursue a safe and threat-free sexual life (WHO, 2010). Therefore, in order to achieve sexual and well-being of both men and women, they need access to comprehensive good-quality information about sex and sexuality; knowledge about the risks they face and their vulnerability to the adverse consequences of sexual activity; their access to sexual health care; an environment that affirms and promotes sexual health. Sexual health concerns are wide-ranging, encompassing sexual and gender identity, sexual expression, relationships, and pleasure. They also include negative consequences or conditions such as: infections with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and their adverse outcomes (such as cancer and infertility).

Health information is defined as data related to a person's medical history, including symptoms, diagnoses, procedures, and outcomes. Health information records include patient histories, lab results, x-rays, clinical information, and notes (AHIMA, 2019). Health information plays an important role as it improves health care quality and patient outcomes by reducing medication and medical errors, reduces unnecessary tests and services and improve the efficiency of care by ensuring everyone involved in a patient's care has access to the same information, reduces administrative costs by making many administrative tasks simpler and more efficient, increases patient involvement in their own health care and reduce the amount of time patients spend

filling out paperwork and briefing providers on their medical histories and finally coordinates with and support public health officials to improve the health of our communities (HealthIT, 2019). Health information highlights the provision of information about health services and providers, thus making patients aware of the health services available. Health information is very important to our lives. People seek for information on their health status more than anything as people used to say "Health is wealth".

Statement of the Problem

Every society on earth needs access to the various sources of health information in order to survive and run efficiently. Health information sources play a critical role in Sexually Transmitted Diseases prevention. It has been established that sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are hidden epidemics with severe health and financial ramifications. These diseases contribute to the total damage of human organs, discomfort, infertility, blindness, deafness, paralysis, and even death. (Eng & Butler, 1997; Center for Disease Control (CDC), 2000). Trucker on the other hand, used to be the major vectors of these diseases as a result of transient nature of their occupation (Huda et al., 2016) cited in (Morris, & Ferguson, 2007; McCree et al., 2010; Abbasi, Rafique, Aziz & Hussain, 2013; KMCC Uganda, 2014; Prajapati, & Sanjel, 2014). They are always in the business of transporting goods and services from a far location to another. The nature of their occupation precludes them from staying with their families. Therefore, this gives them chance to mingle with Female Commercial Sex Workers (FCSWs) at different local rest areas along their major roads.

Knowledge of STDs was found very high among truck drivers plying Nigerian roads as a result of the myriad campaigns done by both governmental and nongovernmental organizations (Kende, 2015). Also a research conducted on access to health information by truck drivers in Nigeria revealed that truck drivers access Health Information mostly for prevention of STDs through: listening to radio, watching Television, and talking to Friends. While truck drivers access Health Information moderately through browsing



Internet, handsets, reading newspapers; reading billboard and attending mobilization campaigns and lastly reading books (Sirajo & Umar, 2023). Despite the high level of knowledge of these diseases and high level of access to myriad sources of health information among truck drivers plying Nigerian roads, it was found that the population of the truck drivers is a potential HIV high risk group in Nigeria as (2.4%) of their population were tested positive in some selected stations in South-west Nigeria (Glory, Onoja, and Komolape 2010). Therefore, this research is focused on exploring the challenges of accessing Health Information sources for Prevention of STDs among Truck Drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To identify the sources of Health Information the truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria uses for prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.
2. To identify the challenges associated with the access of Health Information sources for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases among truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Literature Review

Sexually transmitted Diseases (STDs) are defined as diseases passed from one person to another as a result of a sexual act (Waugh, 2011). This definition includes those passed from an infected mother to a child (congenital infection) as it is evidenced and proved that Sexually Transmitted Diseases can be transmitted from a pregnant mother to the baby before, during or after the baby's birth and that some Sexually Transmitted Diseases such as syphilis Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) can cross the placenta and infect the baby in uterus (World Health Organization, 2015). Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, hepatitis B Viruses and Genital herpes, can be transmitted to the baby during delivery through the birth canal (Center for

Disease Control, 2002; Okonko, Okerentugba, Adejuwon, & Onoh, 2012). Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) can cross the placenta during pregnancy, infect the baby during the birth process and unlike other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), can infect the baby through breast feeding (Center for Disease Control, 2006).

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or infections as they are otherwise called are those groups of infections or diseases that are highly communicable which also the primary mode of their transmission is through sexual intercourse (Gilson & Mindel, 2001). These are among the major causes of illnesses in the world especially in the developing countries (World Health Organization, 2001; Usanga, 2010). Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) affect single people, married people, heterosexuals, bisexuals, homosexuals, and people of all races, religions, and economic backgrounds. Anyone who is sexually active may be at risk. Males can give STDs to female or male sexual partners. Females can infect male sexual partners, female partners, and their own unborn children (Little, 2000).

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), also called venereal diseases according to (Kolesnikow, 2010), are a varied group of more than twenty illnesses that are classified together because they are passed from person to person primarily by sexual contact. Some, such as syphilis and gonorrhea, are ancient afflictions. Some, notably HIV/AIDS, have been identified only in recent decades. Some cause mild, acute symptoms and some are life-threatening. They are caused by many different infectious organisms and treated in different ways. Therefore, these diseases are many and classified according to the type of organism that causes them.

Access to health information and services is circled with so many challenges. These challenges cripple access and utilization as sexual health information increasingly presented digitally, and individuals increasingly seeking sexual health information online, it is important to explore the challenges presented by this developing venue of information provision. According to (Patterson et al., 2019) revealed that there are both practical and socio-cultural challenges to online sexual health content. Those



practical barriers include difficulty in filtering overabundant content; limited awareness of specific, relevant, trusted online sources; difficulties in finding locally relevant information about services; and difficulties in navigating large organizations' websites. While the socio-cultural barriers include fear of being observed; wariness about engaging with visual and auditory content; concern about unintentionally accessing sexually explicit content; and reticence to access sexual health information on social networking platforms or through smartphone applications. These practical and socio-cultural barriers restricted access to information and influenced searching practices.

Time also is very crucial and a very contextual factor when it comes to information seeking and utilization according to Savolainen (2006). He opined that depending on the situation that compels the user, the time available could affect information seeking. This observation can be true as truck drivers lack time to seek for sexual information appropriately as sometimes they prefer consulting traditional medical practitioners. To support this observation, Case (2002) noted that time pressures may differ and the time pressures that are experienced depend on how urgently the information is needed. What this point is trying to say here is that time forces one to do something. The task at hand will determine the time pressure that is experienced by the information seeker.

Sexual health information utilization is found to be affected with other challenges like adolescent age, marital status, and educational status: mother's educational status: poor family communication habit; co-residence with both parents; family monthly income; history of sexual intercourse; poor discussion on SRH matters with sexual partner, peers, and health workers; perception of risk towards HIV/AIDS; exposure towards mass media; addictive substance or drugs use; and geographical accessibility. Therefore the age and educational background of truck drivers can easily affect their Utilization of sexual health information for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases

Methodology

The research methodology adopted was quantitative research method. Also Survey research design was adopted for this study as it allows the researcher to get insight into the thoughts and opinions of the respondents under study. The population of this study comprised both tanker and trailer truck drivers plying Nigerian roads from North to South. The population comprised Seventy-Five Thousand (75,000) registered truck drivers in the North-western States of Nigeria. The sample size of this study was 382 truck drivers and the sampling technique employed for this study was simple random sampling. An adapted questionnaire with a combination of both open and close-ended Questions was used; and it was divided into six (6) sections (A – D). Both face and content validity were conducted to determine the validity of the instrument. The researcher developed the instrument based on the research questions raised and distributed copies of the questionnaires to colleagues, members of staff, and researchers in and outside the Department of Library and Information Science for their observations and comments. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted at Teginia (Rafi Local Government, Niger State) casual local rest area where truck drivers park their vehicles casually for either to repair their vehicles or eat; and sometimes sleep. This casual local rest area was chosen because of its similarities with the study area and it was not part of the study areas. Fourteen (14) copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the truck drivers by the researcher; the copies of the questionnaires were completely returned because the researcher personally administered the instrument and supervise it. The retrieved and completed copies of the questionnaires were subjected to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis, and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used in order to obtain the reliability index. 0.884 coefficient value was obtained. This denotes that the instrument is reliable and can be used for the research work.



Results and Discussion of Findings

Objective 1: The researcher seeks to identify the Sources of health information that truck drivers use for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases in Marabar Josr Jos and Tafa Stations, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Responses collected were analysed and presented in Table 1.1

Table 1: Sources of Health Information Truck Drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria Use for Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

| S/No | Sources of Sexual Health Information | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Radio | 304 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Book | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | Television | 304 | 100.0 |
| 4 | Newspapers | 80 | 26.3 |
| 5 | Magazines | 0 | 0.0 |
| 6 | Friends | 304 | 100.0 |
| 7 | Internet | 138 | 45.4 |
| 8 | Leaflets | 0 | 0.0 |
| 9 | Billboards | 80 | 26.3 |
| 10 | Mobilizations | 80 | 26.3 |
| 11 | Journals | 0 | 0.0 |
| 12 | Health pamphlets | 0 | 0.0 |
| 13 | Handsets | 138 | 45.4 |

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.1 shows the Health Information sources used by truck drivers for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. The Sexual Health Information sources used by truck drivers are: Radio, Television and Friends, with 304 (100%), respectively, Internet and Handsets 138 (45.4%) each, while Newspapers, Billboards, and Mobilisations have the least 80 (26.3%).

The findings of this study revealed that the Sources of Health Information truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria, mostly use for the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases are: Radio, Television, and Friends. The Internet and Handsets are used moderately. Newspapers, Billboards, and Mobilizations were found to be underutilized. While books, magazines, leaflets, journals and

health pamphlets were totally out of use by truck drivers. The finding of this study is in line with (Huda et al., 2016) in a study conducted in Dhaka City on the use of mass media by truck drivers who revealed that truck drivers use television (89%) overwhelmingly and also (54%) of the respondents use radio daily as source of Sexual Health Information. While only few use internets as source of Sexual Health Information.

It is therefore implied from the finding that, if more Sexual Health Information sources are made available and accessible to truck drivers by information professionals, the menace of sexually transmitted diseases can be drastically reduced among truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Objective 2: The researcher also seeks to determine the challenges the truck drivers in the North-western state of Nigeria face from access Health Information sources for prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Responses collected were analyzed and presented in Table 1.2



Table 2: Challenges the Truck Drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria Face from Accessing Health Information Sources for Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

| S/No | Challenges to Access of Sexual Health Information | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Non-availability of required information | 304 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Poor Internet connectivity | 138 | 45.4 |
| 3 | Lack of accurate and accessible information on STDs | 58 | 19.1 |
| 4 | Lack of awareness about the problem of STDs | 138 | 45.4 |
| 5 | Lack of accessible and reliable sources of sexual health information | 123 | 40.5 |
| 6 | Difficulties in finding locally relevant information about Sexual Health Information | 261 | 85.9 |
| 7 | Inability to access sexual health information on social networking platforms | 261 | 85.9 |
| 8 | Sociocultural values affects the utilization of Sexual Health Information | 0 | 0.0 |

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.2 showed challenges the truck drivers in Marabar Josr Jos and Tafa Stations Kaduna State, Nigeria face in accessing to Sexual Health Information for the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. The results revealed that the major challenges encountered are Non-availability of required information 304 (100%), Difficulties in finding locally relevant information about health services and Inability to access sexual health information on social networking platforms 261 (85.9%) each. Other challenges having lower percentages are: Poor Internet connectivity and Lack of awareness about the problem of STDs with 138 (45.4%) each. Lack of accessible and reliable sources of sexual health information had 123 (40.5%). Lack of accurate and accessible information on STDs has least responses with only 58 (19.1%).

The finding of this study revealed that the major challenge to access of Sexual Health Information by truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria is Non-availability of required information.

This finding disagrees with (Patterson et al., 2019) who revealed that there are both practical

and socio-cultural challenges to online sexual health content. Those practical barriers include difficulty in filtering overabundant content; limited awareness of specific, relevant, trusted online sources; difficulties in finding locally relevant information about services; and difficulties in navigating large organizations’ websites. While the socio-cultural barriers include fear of being observed; wariness about engaging with visual and auditory content; concern about unintentionally accessing sexually explicit content; and reticence to access sexual health information on social networking platforms or through smartphone applications. These practical and socio- cultural barriers restricted access to information and influenced searching practices.

By implication, truck drivers require information that is relevant to their health for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, information professionals have a vital role to play in making sure that relevant information is supplied and utilized effectively.

Conclusion



Access to Health Information sources on STDs plays a significant role as far as prevention of sexually transmitted diseases is concerned. The Health Information about STDs if disseminated and satisfied through various information sources and made accessible by the beneficiaries, will go a long way in ensuring access to good health. As seen from the findings of the study, there were multiple Health Information sources on STDs available in which most of the respondents find it difficult to access them. It is concluded that truck drivers accessed Health Information for prevention of STDs in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria via traditional media sources. But with this access, still they are found victims of STDs. This may be that they do not believe or comply with the information they receive through these sources.

Recommendation

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were formulated:

- 1 More information sources that can be accessed and utilized easily should be adequately provided by NURTW, NATO, NACA, NATD to truckers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria. When these information sources such as Books, Newspapers, Magazines, Leaflets, Billboards, Journals, Health pamphlets, Mobilizations among many are made available and accessible to truckers in these local rest areas, they drastically reduce the menace of sexually transmitted diseases among truck drivers in Marabar Jos and Tafa Stations in Kaduna State, Nigeria
- 2 To reduce the challenges of difficulties in finding locally relevant information about health services, and the inability to access sexual health information on social networking platforms, health information providers and librarians, together with the assistance of healthcare workers, should work tirelessly in the provision of health information services through the use of technology. This will ensure a reduction in time wastage and ensure that the

information on sexually transmitted diseases reaches truck drivers.

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