

ASSESSMENT OF ROLE OF MEDICAL LIBRARIANS ON PREGNANT WOMEN UTILISATION OF HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the assessment of role of medical librarians on pregnant women utilisation of health information resources in federal universities in northern Nigeria. A woman's chance of dying from pregnancy and childbirth in Nigeria is high but many of these deaths are preventable if they get information on health care services. Two (2) objectives and two (2) research questions were used for the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Population of the study is twenty three thousand, three hundred and seventy eight (23,356), while the sample size for the study is three hundred and seventy eight (378). Questionnaire was the research instrument used for the study. The stratified sampling technique was used based on geographical zones of the universities studied. The study revealed that the role of medical librarians on utilisation of health information resources by pregnant women is low and poor. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the management of the medical libraries should equip their libraries for adequate services to users including pregnant women and the management of the medical libraries should strive to install Internet services in order to provide effective library services.

Keywords: Health information; Maternal Health; Medical libraries; Pregnant Women; Utilisation.

Introduction

The value of information cannot be overlooked in the present world with the trend of technology turning the world into a global village. Matthews (2008) reported that people are inundated with information every day. Some information are gathered by our senses, and our brains organise and filter this information constantly. Economists define information as a phenomenon that reduces uncertainty, and measure it in terms of exchange rates based on supply and demand. Information is derived and acquired from various places such as the Ministries of Information, Media Houses, Libraries and Universities etcetera.

University is a place where people study for an undergraduate (first) or postgraduate (higher level) degree (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016). According to Raji (2016) a university can be said to be an environment where teachers and scholars meet to discuss a given curriculum after which a degree is awarded. A university cannot exist without lecturers and students because the goal of a university is to inculcate knowledge to students. The main objectives of a university are to enhance learning and promote research activities in its environs.

Federal universities in Nigeria are owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria and they are the responsibilities of the federal government. A good number of the federal universities have teaching hospitals attached to them. The hospitals serve their communities including, people with various diseases, pregnant women and medical students.

Medical librarians are an integral part of the health care team who have a direct impact on health care and the quality of patient care by helping physicians, allied health professionals, and other members in health care stay current in the latest developments in specialty care. They also work closely with patients and consumers who are seeking information on medical care. Medical librarians give health information, such as new medical treatments, clinical and standard trials, measures, tests and equipment, to physicians, nurses, and other allied health professionals. They educate physicians, medical students, and other allied health professionals on how to use medical-related software programs, online resources, search engines, and how to search the Internet for up-to-date evidence-based medicine and other medical information. They assist patients find information, answer consumer health questions, and provide general information to the health care industry (Allied Health Profession, 2016).

Pregnant women health is an important area of health. According to Koblinsky, Moyer, Calvert, Campbell, Campbell, Feigl and Langer (2016) to improve pregnant women health requires action to ensure quality pregnant women health care for all women and girls, and to guarantee access to care for those outside the system. Similarly, a woman's chance of dying from pregnancy and childbirth in Nigeria is 1 in 13 (UNICEF, 2014). Although many of these deaths are preventable, the coverage and quality of health care services in Nigeria continue to fall. Presently, less than 20 per cent of health facilities offer emergency obstetric care and only 35 per cent of deliveries are attended by skilled birth attendants (UNICEF, 2014).

There are several ways of disseminating information in this era of information and communication technology (ICT). To complement the traditional methods of information dissemination, medical librarians should use the new technology means of disseminating information such as text messages, the use of social media like Facebook page and whatsapp group, email messages, television and radio announcements. Nigeria is a developing country that has several challenges in various sectors to attend to; health is one of the sectors the country is putting its best to improve. The eradication of polio by giving free immunization to children and bringing it to their door step is a good development. The only areas that are difficult to reach are the boko haram affected areas; health personnel's cannot possibly risk their lives to immunize the children in the affected areas. This in turn is affecting the health sector and the country at large.

Statement of the Problem

Information on maternal health is essential because it provides medical units' personnel necessary information to be delivered to the pregnant women. Pregnant women are expected to have enough information in order to have good health during and after child birth. Unfortunately, there is constant pregnant women's death due to inadequate maternal health information and many pregnant women are not utilising health information. With adequate utilisation and information dissemination on the importance of antenatal and postnatal in Nigerian Teaching Hospitals, there could be significant reduction of maternal death in Nigeria. The study, therefore, assessed the role of medical librarians on utilisation of information resources on maternal health in northern Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess the role of medical librarians on utilisation of information resources by pregnant women in federal universities in northern Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- 1 find out the role of medical librarians on utilisation of health information resources by pregnant women studied;
- 2 determine the extent of utilisation of health information by pregnant women in the studied medical libraries;

Literature Review

Utilisation of Maternal Health Information

Utilisation of information by medical researchers and healthcare professionals are of paramount importance in the development of functional health information services and system. Utilisation of maternal health services varied greatly by demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Women with secondary and higher education, and those of higher income levels, were more likely to utilise the ideal maternal health services package (Rutarema, Wandera, Jhamba, Akiror and Kiconco 2015). Utilisation of maternal health services is associated with improved maternal and neonatal health outcomes. Considering global and national interests in the Millennium Development Goal and Nigeria's high level of maternal mortality, women's utilisation of maternal health care facility according to Alvaro and Oducado (2015) has a significant value to the wellbeing and survival of both the mother and her child during childbirth. Thus, the role of the medical librarians in ensuring good health for the maternal women through the provision of health information should not be ignored in any society.

Utilisation of maternal health care in most African countries has been linked with several socioeconomic, cultural and demographic factors, although contextual analyses of the latter have been few. A study in Kano State, Nigeria showed that 64% of women with severe obstetric morbidity identified at different hospitals were in critical conditions upon arrival, underscoring the importance of pre-hospital barriers in this situation with free and accessible maternal health care (Yar'Zever and Said 2013). Early and frequent antenatal care (ANC) attendance during pregnancy as well as effective dissemination of health information are important to identify and lessen risk factors in pregnancy and to encourage women to have a skilled attendant at childbirth. It has also been found that utilisation of immunization is lower among children whose mothers have lower (i.e. primary) or no education in Nigeria (Antai, 2012).

Yar'Zerver et.al.(2013) reported that in a study in Kano State, Nigeria, urban and rural women's knowledge levels regarding the use of maternal health care services, some 42.2% of urban and 40.2% of rural women were knowledgeable and used ANC services offered at primary and/or secondary facilities in Kano State, some 64.6% of urban and 33.6% of the rural revealed they were knowledgeable and use family planning services offered by health facilities such as information resources. Only 65.8% of the urban and 31.8% of rural were knowledgeable indicating that hospital delivery was better than home delivery. The low level of knowledge appears to be matched by an equally low rate of patronage of health facilities such as information resources for delivery. Singh et.al

(2012), reported from a study in India that results of the multivariate analysis reiterate that women's education, husband's education, economic status, birth order, health provider's visit and district are the significant determinants of full antenatal care utilisation. Women's education is a vital determinant in the utilisation of complete antenatal care.

Women with middle and higher learning were 1.8 times and 2.6 times likely to utilise full antenatal care compared with uneducated women. Furthermore, the probabilities of receiving complete antenatal care among women who had formal education but below primary level were higher compared with those among uneducated women. Birth order was also found to be a significant determinant in the utilisation of full antenatal care. Women who had had previous experience of childbirth were less likely to utilise full antenatal care compared to those women who experienced childbirth for the first time. Education and the visit of health and information providers tend to increase the level of health care utilisation among women. Educated women and women whose husbands are educated have more advantage over women and their husbands who are not educated; if one party is educated among couple, health information will be fully utilised. The visit of health and information providers helps pregnant women to fully utilise health information and services. Orientation of pregnant women on antenatal health information is also a key player in the utilisation of health information.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design. The survey research design is used because survey type of research is characterized by population and sample as well as the use of data collection instrument. The survey research is also used to measure a situation with a view to correcting inadequacies or effecting improvement (Oyedum, Abedoh, Saka and Alhassan 2015). Twenty-three thousand, three hundred and fifty-six (23,356) target population and thirteen (13) medical libraries of the three (3) selected universities were used for the study. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the teaching hospitals for the study. The stratified sampling was used based on geographical zones where the universities for the study are located. For example, Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital Zaria, University of Jos Teaching Hospitals and University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital are in Northern Nigeria but in different geopolitical zones. Also, random sampling technique was used to select three hundred and seventy eight (378) out of twenty three thousand, three hundred and fifty six (23,356) target population of universities studied. Also, thirteen (13) medical librarians in the selected three (3) university teaching hospitals were used for the study. This is necessary because Bernard (2012) reported this idea by asserting that if a population of the study is less than two hundred (200), the entire population should be used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire and frequency counts and percentages were used and analysed collected data.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Research Question One: What is the role of medical librarians on utilisation of health information resources by pregnant women studied?

Table 1: Role of Medical Librarians on Utilisation of Health Information Resources by Pregnant Women (Medical Librarians)

| S/N | Statements | HU (4) | MU (3) | LU (2) | NU (1) | Mean (\bar{X}) | SD |
|-----|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. | Medical librarians help maternal women utilise health magazines | 6 46.2% | 5 8.5% | - | 2 15.4% | 2.78 | 0.54 |
| 2. | Medical librarians help in the use of newspapers | 3 23.1% | 7 53.8% | 15.4% | 1 7.7% | 2.71 | 0.75 |
| 3. | Medical librarians help with health posters | 6 46.2% | 4 30.8% | 1 7.7% | 2 15.4% | 2.59 | 0.77 |
| 4. | Medical librarians help with health chart / diagrams | 1 7.7% | 9 69.2% | 2 15.4% | 1 7.7% | 2.23 | 0.79 |
| 5. | Medical librarians help with Internet services | 7 53.8 | 4 30.8 | 1 7.7% | 1 7.7% | 2.04 | 0.59 |
| 6. | Medical librarians help with information on social media | 1 7.7% | 6 46.2% | 4 30.8% | 2 15.4% | 2.49 | 0.70 |
| 7. | Medical librarians help with health messages as SMS | 8 61.5% | 3 23.1% | 1 7.7% | 1 7.7% | 1.96 | 0.64 |

Key: Highly Utilised (HU), Moderately Utilised (MU), Lowly Utilised (LU) and Not Utilised (NU)

Table 1 shows that out of these seven items listed for medical librarians to respond regarding their role on utilisation of health information resources by pregnant women, responses indicated that three items have the highest mean scores 2.50 above benchmark; Items 1: health magazines ($\bar{X}=2.78$), Item 2: newspapers ($\bar{X}=2.71$) and Item 3: health posters ($\bar{X}=2.59$), while the other four items produced low mean scores below the 2.50 benchmark on the 4-point Likert scale. These include: Item 4: Medical librarians help health chart / diagrams ($\bar{X}=2.23$), Item 5: Internet services ($\bar{X}=2.04$), item 6: information on social media ($\bar{X}=2.49$) and item 7: Health services as SMS ($\bar{X}=1.96$) indicating that the role of medical librarians on utilisation of health information resources by pregnant women is low and poor.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of utilisation of health information by maternal women in the studied medical libraries?

Table 2: Extent of Utilisation of Health Information by Pregnant Women (Maternal Women)

| S/N | Statements | HU (4) | MU (3) | LU (2) | NU (1) | Mean (\bar{X}) | SD (U) |
|-----|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1. | I use general health education information on pregnancy | 159 68.8% | 19 8.2% | 11 4.8% | 42 18.2% | 2.78 | 0.54 |
| 2. | I use trimester information | 33 14.3% | 120 51.9% | 49 21.2% | 29 12.6% | 2.04 | 0.75 |
| 3. | I use second mister information | 29 12.6% | 126 54.5% | 43 18.6% | 33 14.3% | 1.96 | 0.77 |
| 4. | I use nutritional information | 112 48.5% | 21 9.1% | 10 4.3% | 88 38.1% | 2.23 | 0.79 |
| 5. | I use information on minor complains on pregnancy | 81 35.1% | 36 15.6% | 61 6.9% | 98 42.4% | 2.71 | 0.59 |
| 6. | I use information on sign and symptoms of labour | 98 42.4% | 35 15.2% | 12 5.2% | 86 37.2% | 2.49 | 0.70 |
| 7. | I use information on child delivery | 117 50.6% | 22 9.5% | 5 2.2% | 87 37.7% | 2.59 | 0.64 |
| 8. | I use medical information | 106 45.9% | 20 8.7% | 7 3.0% | 98 42.4% | 2.78 | 0.49 |

Key: Highly Utilised (HU), Moderately Utilised (MU), Lowly Utilised (LU) and Not Utilised (NU)

Table 2 further revealed that out of the eight items listed for pregnant women to respond regarding the extent of utilisation of health information in the library, responses indicated that four have high mean scores above 2.50 bench mark. These items include item 1: I use general health education information on pregnancy ($\bar{X}=2.78$), item 5: I use information on minor complains on pregnancy in the library ($\bar{X}=2.71$), item 7: I use information on child delivery ($\bar{X}=2.78$); are mostly used by the maternal women, while item 2: I use trimester information ($\bar{X}=2.04$), item 3: I use second mister information ($\bar{X}=1.96$), item 4: I use nutritional information ($\bar{X}=2.23$) and item 6: I use information on sign and symptoms of labour ($\bar{X}=2.49$) were rated low by the respondents, indicating that these items are not usually used by the pregnant women.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1: Role of medical librarians on utilisation of health information resources by pregnant women studied

The study revealed that medical librarians do not properly assist pregnant women to utilise the medical libraries studied despite their importance (Table 1). This could be because the Internet services as indicated in Table 1 is poor in these medical libraries. Print resources these days do not satisfy information needs of library users. Thus, most libraries try to support the print materials with Internet services for adequate satisfaction of information needs of the users. This view is supported by Ayaoku and Nwosu (2017) cited Schauffler, (1999) who stated that health professionals in their pivotal role as providers of self-management information to patients can facilitate the use of other information sources by directing patients to the sources such as libraries.

Research question 2: Extent of utilisation of health information by pregnant women in the studied medical libraries

Table 2 disclosed that pregnant women moderately use information from the medical libraries to satisfy their information needs. This is necessary because every human being needs information in life and these categories of users need information to maintain themselves and their babies.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study it could be deduced that the role of medical librarians on pregnant women utilisation of health information resources is partially or moderately achieved in the medical libraries studied. Utilisation of information resources by human beings including the pregnant women is essential to satisfy their information needs. Pregnant women are expected to born and nurture young children and to succeed in achieving this, the medical librarians should strive to ensure that they have access as well as use adequate health information resources often.

Recommendations

1. The management of the medical libraries should equip their libraries for adequate services to users including the pregnant women.
2. The management of the medical libraries should strive to install Internet services in order to provide effective library services.

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