

**Psycho-social factors as correlate of health care seeking behaviour  
among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial  
District, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined psycho-social factors as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State. A descriptive research of survey type was adopted for the study. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 150 subjects using purposive, simple random and stratified sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire was used, a reliability coefficient of 0.87r was observed. The paper was however concluded and appropriate recommendations were made among which are; pregnant and nursing mothers should be educated since education affect individual level of understanding*

*and should focus on the need for antenatal and post natal to safeguard the health of the mother and that of the unborn child and health facilities and services for health care should be subsidized for the benefit of the poor and possibly rich pregnant and nursing mothers.*

**Keywords:** *Psychosocial, Correlate, Health Seeking Behaviour*

## **1 Introduction**

It is however, not uncommon to hear or find cases of maternal complications and untimely death due to the non attendance or ineffective utilization of antenatal care by the pregnant and nursing mothers. The high rate of deaths of women during pregnancy, childbirth or in the immediate postpartum period is due to different influencing risk factors. These are directly linked to psycho-social factors ( Anjorin, Ita, Otu & Bassey, 2012).

Psychosocial factors are factors generating or modifying one's or group's behaviour. These factors are responsible for forming psychological set up of an individual or community for the response or behaviour towards a specific stimulus (South Asia Regional Management Team, 2012).

Clara, Eme and Olayemi (2007) described health care decision making in Nigeria as invariably involving close and extended family members and even neighbours. They explained further that concerned neighbours often give left over medications for seemingly similar diseases, appropriate help is sought only when these and local remedies fail. Dusenbury (2009) asserted that behaviour is the range of actions and mannerisms made by organisms, systems, or artificial entities in conjunction with their environment.

The term human behaviour refers to the sum of what people think, feel and do, which are influenced by culture, attitudes, emotions, values and ethics among other issues (Andrew, 2014).

Some behaviours are considered as being common, some unusual, some acceptable while some outside the acceptable limits.

Andrew (2014) highlighted elements of human behaviour as attitude, speech, actions, reactions, knowledge, choices, decisions, conscience, belief, systems, morals, values, instincts, feelings, circumstances, environment, manners.

South Australian Psychology Teachers (2014) highlighted four different levels of explanation when dealing with human behaviour these include:

**Biological level:** This embraces physical, chemical and biological processes.

Basic processes level explanations: This has to do with psychological processes that are widespread across humans.

**Person level explanations:** This entails individual differences in behaviour.

Socio-cultural level explanations: This has to do with influence other people exert on behaviour; behaviour in social and cultural contexts.

South Asia Regional Management Team (2012) described health behaviour as an action taken by a person to maintain, attain or regain good health and to prevent illness. They further explained that health behaviour comes from a person's health beliefs which forms the crucial link between the emergence of illness on one hand and the health service facilities available at hand on the other.

Nigeria in the past few years has experienced some worsening of child mortality. This can be in part explained by the persisting low numbers of births occurring in health facilities (WHO, 2014).

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Having babies in developing nations may be life threatening. Globally in every minute, a woman dies from an avoidable complications caused by pregnancy (Rotarian Action Group for Population and Sustainable Development, 2014). They further stated that in Nigeria, maternal mortality rate reaches up to 3,200 women (number of mothers per 100,000 births died within 42 days after the childbirth); in Northern Nigeria, particularly in the project target area, this rate is even higher.

The high mortality rate of women during pregnancy, child birth or in the postpartum period is of great concern. Probably, this is as a result of their attitude towards antenatal clinic during pregnancy.

Therefore, the researcher examines psychosocial factors which may be responsible for poor health care seeking behaviour by the mothers especially during pregnancy in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to help the researcher carry out the research:

- a. Would fear of medical examination serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria?
- b. Would fear of taking drugs serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun State South-Western Nigeria?

- c. Would level of education of mothers serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria?
- d. Would financial ability of mothers serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria?

### **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were used to answer the formulated research questions and to carry out the study.

- a. Fear of medical examination will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.
- b. Fear of taking drugs will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.
- c. Level of education of mothers will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.
- d. Financial ability of mothers will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.

## 1.4 Research Methodology

A descriptive research of survey type of which is basically quantitative in nature was used to gather information from the population of the study.

The population for the study comprised all registered pregnant and nursing mothers attending clinics in the state government hospitals in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) respondents representing 10% of the entire population using purposive, simple random and stratified sampling technique for the selection of the respondents during antenatal and post natal clinic days. This was done using fish bowl method of selection. Osun East Senatorial district have a total of twenty one (21) state owned hospitals with Ife sub-district having eight (8) hospitals and Ijesa sub-district with thirteen (13) hospitals. However, simple random sampling technique was used to select four (4) and seven (7) hospitals from Ife and Ijesa districts respectively. Based on the size of state owned hospitals in the two (2) sub-districts, respondents were proportionately sampled using stratified random sampling technique.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on state owned hospitals in Osun East Senatorial District.**

Sub-Senatorial District	No of State Owned Hospitals	No of Hospital selected	Total number of Pregnant Mothers	Total number of Nursing Mothers	Total	No selected
Ife	8	4	275	250	600	60
Ijesa	13	7	625	350	900	90
Total	21	11	900	600	1500	150

A likert format questionnaire which was well validated and tested for reliability was used to collect the data. A reliability coefficient of 0.87r was observed. The completed questionnaires were collected, coded and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages was used to analyze demographic information of the respondents while second part was analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics, with the use of SPSS. Decision for each of the hypotheses was taken at 0.05 alpha level of significance to determine whether the hypotheses is accepted or not accepted.

## 2 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on personal data.**

<b>Age of Pregnant and Nursing</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Mothers</b>		
15-24years	30	20.0
25-34years	64	42.7
35years and above	56	37.3
Total	150	100
<b>No of Children of Pregnant and</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Nursing Mothers</b>		
1 child	44	29.3
2 children	48	32.0
3 children and above	58	38.7
Total	150	100

<b>Marital Status of Pregnant and Nursing Mothers</b>	Frequency	Percentage
Married	126	84.0
Not married	24	16.0
Total	150	100

Table 2 indicated that age range 25-34years, 64(42.7%) respondents are the highest respondents used for the study. The table indicated respondents with 3 children and above 58(38.7%) was the majority of the respondents used for the study, The table also indicated that 126(84%) respondents are married, and this means that most of the respondents are married nursing and pregnant mothers.

## 2.1 Testing of the Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Fear of medical examination procedures will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Means, standard deviation of fear of medical examination on health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Cal r-value	Critical value	Decision
<i>Fear of medical examination</i>	150	11.653	2.04311				
<i>Health seeking behaviour among</i>	150	35.213	5.3696				



<i>pregnant and nursing mothers.</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>.425</i>	<i>.159</i>	<i>Hypothesis is rejected</i>
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Note: N – total number of respondents; X – mean; SD – standard deviation, Df – degree of freedom.

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value of 0.425 which is greater than the critical value of 0.159 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated r-value is greater than critical r-value. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relation between fear of medical examination and health care seeking behaviour. The finding is supported by the assertion of Wikipedia (2014) which stated that some women have been known to avoid becoming pregnant because at time it requires blood transfusion and medical examinations which they would rather avoid. The emotion of fear of medical examination procedure have a significant negative effect on decision-making on health seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers. Tatina , Jitse, Iveta, Jaroslav, Eva, Zuzana, Berrie and Johan (2010) observed that the intensity of negative feeling of pregnancy seems to be an important predictor of patients' delay in health seeking behaviour whenever they are ill.

Hypothesis 2: Fear of taking drugs will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Mean, standard deviation and relationship value of fear of taking drugs and its influence on health care seeking behaviours on pregnant and nursing mothers.**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Cal r-value	Critical value	Decision
Fear of drug taking	150	8.1600	1.8755				

Health seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers.	150	35.2133	5.3690					
				148	.388	.159	Hypothesis is rejected	

Table 4 indicated the calculated Pearson r-value of 0.388 which is greater than the critical value of 0.159 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the table value. The null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that, there is significant relationship between fear of taking drug and health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial district of Osun State, Nigeria. The result of this hypothesis supports that of Traci (2011) who stated that many older people are forgoing medications that offer average prevention, they turned off as a result the prospective side effects that include fatigue and nausea. Hypothesis 3: Level of education of mothers will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.

**Table 5: Mean standard deviation and relationship value of the influence of level of education on health seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mother**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Cal r- value	Critical value	Decision
Level of education	150	7.0200	2.2813				
Health seeking	150	35.213	5.36905	148	.659	.159	Hypothesis

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behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers. is rejected

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Table 5 shows that the calculated Pearson r-value of 0.659 is greater than the critical value of 0.159 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the table value. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between level of education and health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial district of Osun State. The result of this hypothesis supports that of Nitai, Islam, Rafiqul, Wasimul and Halida (2003) who stated that better educated women are more aware of health problems, know more about the availability of health care services, and use this information more effectively to maintain or achieve good health status. They further stated that mother's education may also act as a proxy variable of a number of background variables representing women's higher socio-economic status, thus enabling her to seek proper medical care whenever she perceives it necessary.

Also, Stephen (2008) affirmed that education level is significant enabling factor in positive health care seeking behaviour.

**Hypothesis 4:** Financial ability of mothers will not significantly serve as correlate of health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria.

**Table 6: shows the mean, standard deviation and relationship value of financial ability of mother and health seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Cal r-	Critical	Decision
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						value	value	
Financial ability of mothers	150	8.3800	3.272					
Health seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers.	150	35.213	5.369	148	.388	.159		Hypothesis is rejected

Table 6 indicated that the calculated Pearson r-value of 0.612 is greater than the critical value of 0.159 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the table value. The null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that, there is significant relationship between financial ability of mothers and health care seeking behaviour among pregnant and nursing mothers in Osun East Senatorial district of Osun State, Nigeria. The result of this hypothesis supports the findings of Peter, Carolyn and Alwyn (2008) who stated that when families face high medical expenses or debt, they often delay medical care, to avoid incurring additional expenses they cannot afford. Women intend and desire to consult health professionals' services but costs related to these services seemed to be a challenge (Constanze & Rosmane, 2013).

### 3 Conclusion

Based on the data analysed and interpreted. The following conclusions were made:

- There is significant relationship between fear of medical examination and health care seeking behaviour. This implies that fear of medical examination influences health care

seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers, in Osun East Senatorial District, Osun State.

- There is significant relationship between fear of taking drugs and health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers. This means that fear of drug taking affects health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers.
- There is significant relationship between level of education and health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers. This implies that people with higher or lower level of education have different ways of health care seeking behaviour that women with higher education can afford proper health care.
- There is significant relationship between financial ability of mothers and health care seeking behaviour of pregnant and nursing mothers. This implies that mothers' affordability of health care charges determines whether to seek for health care or not

#### **4 Recommendations**

Based on the finding, the following recommendations were made:

- Pregnant and nursing mothers should be encouraged to submit themselves for medical examination as diagnostic measure to pin point the exact problem in the bid to resist the life of the victim from untimely death. At the same time assure them of the confidentiality of the findings.
- Pregnant and nursing mothers should be encouraged to take prescribed drugs when it is necessary, that drug taking is a chemotherapy basically recommended to solve identified health problem hence they should be counseled to comply with the prescription to forestall negative consequences.

- Pregnant and nursing mothers should be educated since education affect individual level of understanding and should focus on the need for antenatal and post natal to safeguard the health of the mother and that of the unborn child.
- Health facilities and services for health care should be subsidize for the benefit of the poor and possibly rich pregnant and nursing mothers.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical consent for this study was granted as an addendum to this study.

Permission for this study to be conducted was obtained from the Osun State Director of Primary Health Care Services, Osogbo, Osun State, as well as the Head of the unit in each of the selected health care centers in Osun East Senatorial District of Osun State. Before participation in the study, all participant were informed on the importance of the study. Participation was voluntary. Personal details and collected data were made anonymous.

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