

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN AWARENESS CREATION AND PREVENTION OF BREAST CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the significance of community education in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. This study was guided by three research questions and one null hypothesis. The research adopted a descriptive design with a population of 1,558 community based women organizations in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas inclusive of all the 19 women patients in the Breast Cancer Unit of Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. A total sample size of 621 was drawn from the respondents using the purposive and proportionate-stratified sampling technique. Data for the study was collected with the use of a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in the field of Adult and Non-Formal Education with a recorded reliability index of 0.87. Responses to the questionnaires were analysed with the descriptive statistics of mean, grand mean and the hypothesis were tested using the Chi-square at a 0.05 level of significance. The results of the data analysed revealed that though the women have a fairly high level of awareness and knowledge of prevention of breast cancer, most respondents are still not aware of the risk factors that expose women to the disease. As a result of the findings, the need for Community Education Programmes to create more awareness of Breast Cancer among women in the study area becomes very necessary. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that there is need for more awareness creation among women using community education programmes. Therefore, NGOs, Religious bodies, Volunteers, and Government Agencies interested in community development should establish community outreach structures to ensure facilitation, assimilation and sustainability of breast cancer awareness amongst women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa LGAs in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.*

**Key Words:** Community Education, Awareness Creation, Prevention, Breast Cancer, Women

### **Introduction**

Community education is a vital instrument of addressing the needs and solving the problems peculiar to a particular set of people. It is obvious that it is an activity without limited boundaries. Any group of people who have problems peculiar to them that need to be solved or needs that

require to be addressed would be a community that needs education (Amirize, 2007). This kind of education is organized outside the formal school system and it places emphasis on the transformation of people's attitude and actions in a positive manner. Community education therefore becomes a ready tool for creating awareness among women on the prevention, and management of diseases such as breast cancer. Breast cancer among women had been reported to be the most common causes of cancer related deaths globally. According to Aderounmu, Egbewale and Ojotifeitimi (2006), it accounts for 31% of cancer cases and 19% of deaths among women. The Cancer Statistics Worldwide (2012:24), documented that:

about 1.7million, seven hundred new cases of female breast cancer are diagnosed each year, making it the most commonly occurring disease among women, accounting for over 1/3 of the estimated annual 4.7million cancer diagnosis in females and it is the second most common found cancer tumor after lung cancer in both sexes.

There are ample evidences that breast cancer is now the most common cancer among female in both the developing and developed in world with over 55% of occurrence (Akinkugbe et al. 2012). More so, reports have shown that the incidence rate of cancer has doubled yearly for the past four decades, and the incidence increases with age (Althuis, 2005). While breast cancer prevalence is on the increase, in Nigeria, and others developing countries it is the most common cancer, and among the second leading cause of death among cancerous patients. WHO (2014), estimated about 34.2% of death yearly as a result of breast cancer. While breast cancer is major public health problem, early detection and diagnosis have shown promising results and a greater chance of survival of infected patients (Odusanya & Tayo, 2001).

The diseases is now a burden in Nigeria, and advanced stages there is slight of chances of survival largely due to inadequate treatment model for cancer in the country (Fung, 1998). Many reasons have been attributed to major causes of breast cancer, chief among them, is late diagnosis, lack of adequate information, lifestyle and exposure to radiation (Aderounmu, Egbewale & Ojotifeitimi, 2006). World Cancer Report (2014), added that substance abuse, eating disorder, alcohol use and physical inactivity are among the major risk factors globally for breast cancer. Some chronic infections among others are also listed as risk factors for cancer, especially in low and middle income countries.

The Lakeshore Cancer Centre (2015), estimated statistically that by 2020 the incidence rate of cancer will increase in both male and female population in Nigeria with about 42 million cases resulting about 30,534 to 31,920 deaths. This burden of breast cancer cases in Nigeria is heighten by the lack of adequate treatment and lack of preventive modality as well as the abysmal survival rate of 10%. Olopade (2004) lamented that when compared the breast cancer survival of Nigeria and United State whose survival rate of breast cancer as high as 85% is disheartening. Also, a recent study conducted by Udoye and Uwaezuoke (2014), reported that after histopathological diagnosis, about 106 women 32.6% out of 334 who presented with breast lesions were diagnosed with breast cancer.

Vital information and knowledge about breast cancer it helps sometimes to determine one's attitude or behavior, especially how women will engage both in primary and secondary prevention. It is supported by the Health Belief Model which stressed on behavioural changes from perceived threats, benefits, or severity to a particular disease. Recent reports have shown that there is positive relationship between the performance of Breast Self-Examination (BSE) and early detection early of breast cancer ( Odusanya & Tayo, 2001; Uzoma, 2015) .

Community education is therefore an important tool that can provide the much needed platform to raise the level of awareness of women on the prevention of this disease. Public enlightenment programmes, workshops, outreach structures and other community based education programmes carried out in non-formal settings will be appropriate in this education process. It is against this background that this study attempted to critically examine the significance of community education in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer among women in Koluama/Opokuma (KOLGA) and Yenagoa Local Government Area (YELGA) of Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **Review of Related Literatures**

Asuquo and Olajide (2015), carried out a study in the University of Calabar, on the role of health education on breast cancer awareness among female undergraduate. They raised 3 hypotheses. Their study used the survey research design method. A total sample size of 152 female undergraduate students was used for the study. The data collected were analysed using the chi-square statistical method. The result showed that individual knowledge of the symptoms and risk factors of breast cancer is significantly affected by breast cancer awareness. Also there is significant knowledge on the practice of breast self-examination among the studies population. The result showed that health education can positively help in reducing breast cancer. The study recommended other related studies and awareness campaign among female students should be carried out regularly to increase awareness level they also urge government and non-governmental organizations to organize seminars, health awareness talk shows and campaign. Their study is related to this present study in many ways, especially as it is vested on breast cancer awareness by health educators. This is not so different from community educators that carried out health related and literacy awareness campaigns for national and community development.

Tobin and Okeowo (2014), examined the practices and perceptions towards breast self examination (BSE) among secondary school teachers in Benin City. Their study adopted a cross-sectional design. A total of 300 sample size of female secondary school teachers in some selected local government area in Benin. A self-structure questionnaire was administered and collected using the method that was used to administer the instrument. The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS, 20.0) at a 0.05 significance level. The result showed that high awareness level of BSE among the respondents but showed poor attitude and behaviour towards BSE practises in the studied population. The study recommended that aggressive awareness campaigns should be carried out in among teachers of secondary school in Nigeria. This study also establish a relationship with this present study as address one of the key issues which awareness of breast cancer screening using BSE.

Omotara, Yahya, Amodu and Bimba (2012) examined awareness of Breast cancer in Northeast Nigeria. Their study used a cross-sectional descriptive community-based study with a total population of 1600 rural women who were aged 20-40 years, that were randomly selected from 28 village units. The study used a self-structured and validated questionnaire with 23 items. The result of their study showed that majority of the women have heard of breast cancer. The results suggested there is need for a critical awareness of breast cancer. Their study is related to this current study as it also examines the need for awareness creation on the prevention and management of breast cancer. This current study however, would examine the significance of community education as a tool in creating awareness and this study will be carried out in Bayelsa State.

Adekemi, Adenike and Abimbola (2012) investigated the knowledge and screening of breast cancer some selected women in rural communities of Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive cross-sectional study using self-structured questionnaire, with reliability of the instrument range between 0.81 and 0.95. The results showed that majority of the women had adequate and good knowledge about risk of factors of breast cancer and symptoms. Their study recommended that health care professionals, especially those that are working in the primary health care units, to enhance women's knowledge, behaviour and skills on how to use this BSE procedure to effectively reduce breast cancer among women in the studied area.

Adetifa and Ojikutu (2009) investigated the trends in the prevalence of breast cancer, Nigeria. Their study drew a total sample of 1,000 respondents which were taken from the target population consisting of women aged 15 years to 60 years that spread across the 20 LGAs of Lagos State. A total of 50 questionnaires were administered in each LGA. The results shown that the prevalence of breast cancer differs across age ranges and groups alike, while those aged 26 to 45 having the highest prevalence. The study also showed that women's occupation is important to in the diagnosis of breast cancer. The study shows continuous increase in prevalence of breast cancer over years. This study, though similar to the current study, was restricted to examining the prevalence rate of breast cancer among women in Lagos State.

The review of these various studies by different researchers revealed that quite a number of researches have been carried out on breast cancer, its prevalence rate and the level of awareness of women on the prevention and management of the disease but no study has been carried out on the significance of community education in providing the much needed awareness on the prevention of the disease. This current study therefore would examine the significance of community education in awareness creation on the prevention and management of breast cancer among women in kolokuma-Opokuma and Yenagoa LGAs of Bayelsa State.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted the descriptive survey method. The population of this study was 1,584 women of the various Community Based Women Organizations in Kolokuma/ Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State and including all 19 women patients in the Cancer Centre of Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. A sample size of 621 women was drawn from Community Based Women Organizations in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa LGAs and including the 19 breast cancer patients at the Cancer Centre of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa in Bayelsa State. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the local government areas for the study while the proportionate sampling technique was adopted in choosing 40% of the population in each of the women organizations used for the study and all 19 patients of breast cancer in FMC. The instrument for research was a self-structured questionnaire tagged "Significance of Community Education in Awareness Creation and Prevention of Breast Cancer among Women (QSCEACPBCW)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections A and B. Section "A" measured the demographic factors of the women while Section "B" measured the significance of community education in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer. The Questionnaire consisted of twenty-six (26) items responses anchored on modified Likert four points scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher and six research assistants. The researcher trained the research assistants on how to administer research instruments to the respondents. The same method applied, was equally used in retrieving the questionnaires after an agreed period. At

the end of the exercise, 601 questionnaires were returned initially and a reprinted of 20 more copies were administered to respondents for effective administration, completion, collection and description of participants. A total of 621 number of questionnaires were administered and retrieved. Data were presented in tables and analyzed using the mean statistics. The mean statistics was adopted in answering the research questions raised in the study. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistic at 0.05 significant level. For the research questions, any mean score below 2.5 was considered as low and not significant while mean scores of 2.5-3.49 were considered as high and 3.50-4.99 were considered as very high.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the significance of community education in awareness creation, management and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically this study seeks to:

- i. Expose the types of community education programmes that are available in awareness creation, management and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State
- ii. Determine the level of awareness on management and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State.
- iii. Determine the significance of community education in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What are the types of community education programmes that are available for awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State?
- ii. What is the level of awareness on management and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State?
- iii. What are the significance of community education in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer among women in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State?

### Responses to Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** What are the types of community education programmes that are available for awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer in selected local government areas of Bayelsa State?

**Table 4.1: Mean Response on the Types of Available Community Education Programmers**

S/N	ITEMS	- X	Decision
1	Extension programmes on health matters are available in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa LGAs.	2.85	Available
2	Religious organizations organize Sunday school classes on breast cancer as a form of community education programme.	2.57	Available
3	The health workers often carry out awareness campaign on breast cancer in my community.	2.54	Available
4	There are community outreach structures on breast cancer prevention in my community.	2.43	Not Available
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.59	<b>Available</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2015**

The analysis of data on research question one as contained in table 4.1 shows that items 1, 2 and 3 in table 4.1 with mean scores 2.85, 2.57 and 2.54 respectively were accepted by majority of the respondents. This implies that that Non-governmental Organizations have carried out extension programmes on health matters, Religious organizations carried out Sunday School programmes on breast cancer awareness creation and there has been often awareness campaign on breast cancer by health workers. With a mean score of 2.43, most of the respondents disagreed to the statement in item 4 that there are community outreach structures on breast cancer awareness creation in their communities.

With a grand mean of 2.59 the answer to research question 1 therefore, is that available community education programmes for awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer in the study area are Extension Programmes on health matters, Sunday School Classes and awareness campaign on breast cancer by health workers.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of awareness on management and prevention of breast cancer among women in selected local government areas of Bayelsa State?

**Table 4.2: Mean Response on the Level of Awareness on Management and Prevention of Breast Cancer among Women in Bayelsa State**

S/N	ITEMS	- X	Decision
	You are aware that:		
1	Bruising, bumping, or injuring the breast can cause breast cancer.	2.76	Highly Aware
2	Women with large breasts are more likely to get breast cancer than women with small breasts.	2.18	Lowly Aware
3	Many women who do not have any of the known risk factors can still get breast cancer.	2.92	Highly Aware
4	The best time to perform breast self-examination is just after a woman's menstrual period, when lumps are most easily detected.	2.13	Lowly Aware
5	Early detection means a greater chance of surviving breast cancer.	3.40	Very Highly Aware
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.68	Highly Aware

**Source: Field survey, 2015**

The contents of table 4.2 on research question two revealed that item 1 in the table with mean score 2.76 showed that majority of the respondents are highly aware that bruising, bumping, or injuring the breast can cause breast cancer. The mean score of 2.18 showed that most of the respondents have low awareness that Women with large breasts are more likely to get breast cancer than women with small breasts. Items 3 and 4 with mean scores of 2.92 and 2.13 respectively revealed that most of the women are highly aware that women without any of the known risk factors can still get breast cancer, but do not know that the best time to perform breast self examination is just after a woman's menstrual period when lumps are most easily detected. With a mean score of 3.40 the respondents are very highly aware that early detection means a greater chance of surviving breast cancer.

With a grand mean of 2.68, the answer to research question 2 is that the women of Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa LGAs are highly aware on the management and prevention of breast cancer.

**Research Question 3:** What are the significance of community education in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer among women in selected local government areas of Bayelsa State?

**Table 4.3: Mean Response on Significant Role of Community Education in Awareness Creation and Prevention of Breast Cancer among Women in the Study Area**

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	Women can learn to go for periodic medical check through community education.	3.40	Significant
2	The provision of vital and useful information on the screening methods of breast cancer by carrying out community awareness and sensitization programmes in clinics and workshops will help women to prevent the disease	3.47	Significant
3	Community education will enable women know how to detect signs of breast cancer on time.	3.46	Significant
4	Women will change their unhealthy habits that expose them to the risk of breast cancer through knowledge from community education programmes.	3.33	Significant
	<b>GRAND MEAN</b>	3.42	Significant

**Source:** Field survey, 2015

Items 1, 2, 3 and 4 in table 4.3 with mean scores 3.40, 3.47, 3.46 and 3.33 respectively showed that the respondents agreed to the statements that: women learn to go for periodic medical check through community education, and that community education provides vital and useful information on the screening methods of breast cancer by carrying community awareness and sensitization programmes in clinics and workshops will help women to prevent the disease. Community education also enables women know how to detect signs of breast cancer on time and that community education leads women to change their unhealthy habits that expose them to the risks of breast cancer. With a grand mean of 3.42, it can be established that community education plays significant role in awareness creation and prevention of breast cancer among women in Bayelsa State. The significant roles played by community education include those mentioned above.

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings for research question one revealed that some Non Governmental Organizations have organized extension programmes on health matters in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa Local Government Areas. It was revealed that not so much has been done in terms of awareness creation through community outreach structures in Kolokuma/Opokuma and Yenagoa

LGAs. The type of awareness campaigns contributes as preventive measures among public health problems. More so, religious organizations such as churches have also organized Sunday School classes on breast cancer awareness as a form of community education programme. Some health workers have also organized awareness campaign on breast cancer. The findings of this study are in line with a similar study conducted by Azenha et al. (2011), who reported that grassroots networks, advocacy programmes and NGOs have strong sophisticated campaigning strategies for breast cancer. It is vitally important to note that communication plays a central role in information dissemination across these community education programmes. The influence of communication on community education is without social, cultural and geographical borders or boundaries as it cut across various societal settings (Soola, 2003; Okorie, 2011), as they disseminate information to target audiences in society. This extends to almost every aspects of our society that is exposed to these programmes. Community education also uses interpersonal channels such as face-to-face, communication. These platforms among others include community, organizations, groups and to lesser extent teachers, relatives, friends, pastors, imams, neighbours, opinion leaders, extension workers and family members (Okorie, Kehinde, Oyer, Williams, & Soola, 2014).

Result of the findings in research question two also revealed that majority of the women are aware that bruising, bumping or injuring the breast can cause breast cancer. Most of the respondents however are not aware that women with large breasts are more likely to get breast cancer than women with small breast. The result also showed that women are aware that many women who do not have any of the known risk factors can still get breast cancer but they do not know that the best time to perform breast self-examination is just before a woman's menstrual period when lumps are most easily detected. Kaplan et al., (2006) noted that most women are also aware that early detection means a greater chance of surviving breast cancer. This implies that the level of awareness of women on breast cancer prevention and management is not so high yet but there seems to be increased awareness among them. These findings in this study are similar to the study of Olajide et al. (2014) who found that there is high level of awareness among women on breast cancer, however, this did not translate into early presentation of the disease. More so, the findings in this study is also in agreement with the reports of Omotara et al. (2012) who carried out a study on awareness, attitude and practice of rural women regarding Breast cancer in Northeast Nigeria and report high awareness level among their studied population. They further added that there is a critical need for more and sustained awareness of Breast cancer. This is necessary because the key to prevention of any public health disease is awareness.

The findings in research question three revealed that community education plays a significant role in the prevention and management of breast cancer among women. Community education through its various programmes can teach women to go for periodic medical check, provide women with regular information on breast cancer and screening method, and enable women know how to detect signs of breast cancer on time. This is supported by so many researchers including a recent the study by Azami-Aghdash et al. (2015), that stressed that through community education, women can change their unhealthy habits that expose them to the risk of breast cancer. This is also in line with the findings of Deekor and Nnodim (2006), reported on how women of Kegbara Dere Community in GOLGA of Rivers State were chosen as one of the pilot centres to carry out outreach programme on health, and affirmed that women who benefitted were discouraged through teaching from the unhealthy practices that predisposed them to urogenital tract infections.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that though the women have a fairly high level of awareness on the prevention of breast cancer, some of them are still not aware of the factors that expose women to the disease and the ways of managing them. Consequently, the need for more community education programmes to create more awareness among women in Bayelsa becomes very necessary. The Sunday school model, NGOs, other religious organizations, outreach structures as well as public enlightenment programmes are among some of the community education programmes that can be used to create this awareness. This study further asserted that these programmes are significant because through them, the women will become aware that they need to go for periodic medical check, acquire regular information on breast cancer and screening methods, and know how to detect signs of breast cancer on time.

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