

Healthcare worker's knowledge, attitudes, and practices of providing maternal and newborn care to women with disabilities in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Introduction/Background:

According to the WHO, disability in the context of health is any restriction or lack (attributable to impairments) of the ability to perform an activity in the manner or range considered normal for a human being.¹

According to the World Bank, one billion people, or 15% of the global population, have some form of disability, and the prevalence is higher in developing countries². These disabilities cause stigmatization and discrimination, affecting access to health care, education, housing, and fundamental rights.

An estimated 19 million Nigerians live with disabilities, of which over three million reside in Lagos state³. Women with disabilities often face unintentional harsh treatment and neglect, and their unmet health needs are not given the deserved attention. However, health workers lack the knowledge and skills to deliver adequate healthcare services to people with disabilities.

Objective:

The study evaluated the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of healthcare professionals providing maternal and newborn care to women with disabilities.

Methods:

An online questionnaire-based survey involving healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses/midwives, pharmacists, and other cadres' staff, was conducted across various levels of health facilities. The study was conducted between November 2023 and February 2023 across 20 LGAs in Lagos state. The data was designed and analyzed using SPSS version 20 to explore healthcare workers' knowledge, practice, training needs, and experience in providing maternal and newborn care to women with disabilities.

Results:

Among the 119 healthcare providers who participated in the study, the mean year of work experience was 3.74 (± 4) years. Most (88%) had provided maternal and newborn care services to women with disabilities. Neither the participant's gender (female 72.4%, male 27.6%, $p = 0.922$) nor the healthcare cadres (doctors 37.2%, nurse/midwife 18.6%, community pharmacists 4.4%, CHEW 8.8% and others 31.0%, $p = 0.951$) were associated with knowledge and practice of

¹ Disability-related stigma and discrimination <https://www.disabilityevidence.org/resources/sightsavers-disability-related-stigma-and-discrimination-sub-saharan-africa-and-south>

² World Report on Disabilities 2011 <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>

³ The National Population Commission of Nigeria <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/288954-19-million-nigerians-living-with-disability-official.html?tztc=1>

maternal and newborn care services provided to women with disabilities. However, the majority (85.7%) had not received any training about providing healthcare services to women of reproductive age living with disabilities.

Conclusions/Recommendation

Healthcare workers need improved knowledge and practices in providing quality maternal and newborn care services to women with disabilities in Lagos State. It is recommended that relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies work closely with various educational institutions to train healthcare professionals.

Keywords: Healthcare worker, knowledge, attitude, practices women with disabilities, and maternal and newborn care