

Information Needs and Seeking Behavior for the Detection of Ovarian Cancer among Yaba College of Technology Females in WITED, Lagos State

Nureni-Balogun, Saidat Asunke¹; Alausa, Jelili Olawale²

Yaba College of Technology, Yaba (Yabatech Library), Lagos State ^{1,2}

olawaleislam9@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The article is on information needs and seeking behaviour for the detection of ovarian cancer among Yabatech female in WITED (Women in Technical Education), Lagos State. Objectives of the paper to find out information needs of females in the areas of ovarian cancer. The method adopted was descriptive survey research design. Population of the study was 520 Yabatech females in WITED, Lagos State. Since the entire population was manageable, there was no need for sampling; therefore, a total enumerative census of all the 520 females were used. The researchers used a questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Out of 520 copies of questionnaires distributed, 464 copies were completely filled, representing 89.23% response rate analyzed for the study. The study findings majorly revealed that females are in serious need of different information in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer. The study analysis further showed that both the older and younger females agreed that they need health information about their personal risk for ovarian cancer, that include: "information on the causes of ovarian cancer, symptoms of ovarian cancer, health habits that could reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, information on the management of ovarian cancer and fear of occurrence, physical nature or body behaviour of to ovarian cancer and its sexual implication among others". It was equally found that married and unmarried females do not consult the same information resources as it relates to the early detection of ovarian cancer resulting from several challenges upon which recommendations were made.

KEYWORDS: Information, Needs, Seeking-behavior, Detection, Ovarian, Cancer and Female.

INTRODUCTION

‘What is information?’ Attempts to answer such a question, not surprisingly, occupied the thoughts of information scientists for many ages - almost certainly since before the term ‘information science’ was coined in 1955. If the lay

person is asked to define information, he is most likely to regard it as: An item of knowledge or intelligence; a fact or circumstance of which one is told. This is just one of the many dictionary definitions of the word information. Indeed, information scientists appear to have been reluctant to propose concise definitions of information, preferring rather to discuss concepts which includes the work of Madden (2014) who reviewed information concepts proposed over the last fifty years. The summary of such concepts considered in available literature is given as follows.

- “Information as a representation of knowledge or stored knowledge. Traditionally the storage medium has been books, but the electronic media are becoming very prominent.
- Information as data in the environment which can be obtained from a range of environmental stimuli and phenomena; not all of which are intended to ‘convey’ a message, but which can be informative when appropriately interpreted;
- Information as part of the communication process whose meanings are in people rather than in words or data. Timing and social factors play significant role in the processing and interpretation of information; and
- Information as a resource or commodity transmitted in a message from sender to receiver. The receiver interprets the message as intended by the sender. There may be added value as the information is disseminated or exchanged”.

One of the most common ways to define information is to describe it as one or more statements or facts that are communicated and received by humans that have some forms of worth to the recipients. For example, the Sesame Street character “Cookie Monster” describes information as “news or facts about something,” or, as the first definition in the *Random House College Dictionary* suggests information as “knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance”. According Ezemba, (2014) cites Edoaka defined the term “information as relevant data, fact or idea available for useful purposes”. Information may be reasonably considered a under primitive concepts, as energy, electricity, distance, power, and work. One understands each of them intuitively, but there are no adequate definitions for them. Their lack of precise definition has not prevented men and women from studying their properties, behaviours, and interrelationships within systems and organizations. Belkin is “not concerned with definitions of information, but rather with concepts of information. The distinction is that a definition presumably says what a phenomenon defined is, whereas a concept is always of looking at, or interpreting the phenomenon.

The foregoing has shown that information has been variously conceived as important resource that contributes immensely towards the development of individuals and nations at large especially in this current era of information explosion. It provides the main stay for the development of knowledge, the foundation for innovations, the resources for informed citizenry and as a result becomes a key commodity for the progress of any viable society (Prabha, 2013). Information is published in a range of formats and it is important to select and use those appropriate to your need. Information is essential to all human beings and it has become the most important elements for societal progress (Abdulrahman, 2015). Information is no doubt, a channel of change, growth and development; as a result, no organization or individual can experience change and development if information is lacking, neither can there be any meaningful progress, if little emphasis is placed on the use of qualitative information as stored in libraries. Wilson and Gapsiso (2014) observed that information, which would make an individual become informed, would help reduce ignorance and uncertainty; and noted that although, many lexical connotations of ‘information’ exist, both within information science and in other fields, it is however being applied daily and widely, and do not provide

a deeper or formal understanding and explanation. This has however led to the misinterpretation and lack of understanding of the concept 'information and information need'.

Information needs are of various types, apart from express needs or articulated needs, there are unexpressed needs which clients are aware of but does not like to express (Okello-obura, 2010). Thus, Wilson (2000) expressed that information needs are influenced by a variety of factors such as "the range of information sources available; the use to which the information will be put; the background, motivation professional orientation and individual characteristic of the user. Other factors are the socio-political, economic, legal, and regulation system surrounding the user as well as the consequence use". These variables may affect a person's interest in the type of information he needs, seeks and how he goes about obtaining that information, which leads to information seeking while the manner exhibited in the seeking process is the seeking behavior (Kolawale & Igwe, 2016).

Information seeking behavior according to Kolawale and Igwe (2016) was considered as the attitude and characteristic which individual exhibit in the process of searching for, accessing and using information that will satisfy his identified information needs; adding that it is a conscious effort to acquire information, as well the purposive search for information as a result of the consequences of needs with the objective of satisfying such needs. Information needs, information seeking behaviour and availability of sources of information have to varying groups of individuals has to be considered due to the variety of information resources and access points, authentication procedure set by publishers and search federations availed by libraries and level of training and awareness provided in the use of information resources Kolawale and Igwe (2016) cited (Snakpel, 2015). Study of females' information needs (information needs of female staff in WITED in this case) would help direct libraries to improve upon their services. Their reading habits, information seeking behavior (in terms of all forms/formats of information resources especially on the emergence of ICT/electronic revolution) has shifted their preferences of information forms from print to electronic to some extent. The information need (need for information) is a factual situation in which there exists an inseparable inter connection with 'information' and 'need'. Information originates & generated because there exists a need or an interest. The presence of a purpose for the use of information leads us to conclude that it is needed. Thus the presence of what might be called an 'information purpose' is a necessary condition of information need. There are two necessary conditions of information need:

- i. The presence of an information purpose
- ii. The information in question contributes to the achievement of the purpose.
- iii. Information needs in the above conditions

Information seeking is undertaken a message that satisfy a perceived need (Wright & Guy, 1997) cited in Ogbomo (2010). This activity may be actively done when taking steps to satisfy a felt need. Everyday each of us is forced to solve many different vital problems connected with working, training, education, etc. for decision making in every concrete situation, it is necessary to have complete and recent information about these things. "Information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker. Information seeking behaviour (ISB) resulted from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the user, who as a consequence makes demand upon on formal system such as libraries and information centers, or some other person in order to satisfy the perceived information need. The information seeking behaviour essentially refers to locate discrete knowledge elements. It is concerned with the interactive utilization of the three basic resources namely, people, information and system. Further in order, to satisfy the information needs, the user

actively undergoes the information seeking process. The attempt of the user in obtaining the needed information results from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the user” (Singh & Satija, 2006)

Case (2016) noted that information behavior is a field of which deals with information and people. The scholar explain that there must be subjective expression for a person to experience information needs and to engage in information seeking behavior. Cancer is a major life-threatening disease that can evoke deep-rooted fear of death and sense of loss of hope, such that the word “cancer” has powerful connotations of anxiety, pains and suffering (Al-Amri, 2009). Cancer is a disease of cells in the body; and people with cancer can suffer a high incidence of psychological distress, which needs adjustment strategies (Sweeney, 2006).

The term cancer is used generically for more than 100 different diseases including malignant tumors, of different sites. These factors act together or in sequence to cause cancer (American Cancer Society, 2016). According to WHO (2002), cancer as a disease arises principally as a consequence of exposure of individual to carcinogenic (cancer-causing) agents in what they inhale, eat or drink, and are exposed to in their work environment or habitats.

The nature of the diseases shows that a large proportion of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer, often have a relatively short illness trajectory and this may be due to the fact that 70 to 80 percent of women with ovarian cancer have diseases recurrence following their first-line treatment (Sweeney, 2017). Now more than ever, cancer patient wants health information (Shea- Budgell, Kostaras, Myhill & Hagen, 2014). Patients with various types of cancer have most common information needs priorities and these priorities include information that relates to prognosis, diseases, and treatments (Tariman, Dorenbos, Schepp, Singhal & Berry, 2014). Ankem (2006) pointed out that a diagnosis of cancer is a stressful life and that, the nature of the diseases requires patients to learn about the illness, and make difficult decisions regarding treatment, and cope with the consequences of the illness.

Throughout the world, there is a growing interest in people taking more responsibilities and involvement in their own health and having an involvement that will enable them to understand that they can maintain a healthy lifestyle. Patients with various types of cancer have information needs priorities which include information that relates to prognosis, diseases and treatment (Tariman, Doorenbos, Schepp, Singhal & Berry, 2014). Ovarian cancer is known as abnormal growth of cells in the ovaries, which is the reproductive organs that produce the ova, egg cells in women. There are numerous types of ovarian tumors and overall, they fall into benign, borderline, malignant. About 80% are benign which occur mostly in young women between the ages of 20 and 45, borderline tumors occur at older women, malignant tumors are more common in older women between 45 and 65years. Ovarian cancer amounts to 3% of the cancers in females and is the fifth most common cause of death due to cancer in women. According to Iyoke (2011) Management of Ovarian cancer requires a multi-disciplinary approach involving the gynecological oncology surgeon, general surgeon, medical oncologist, oncology nurse, clinical psychologist, hospice care givers and pathologist. Based on this researchers intends to study information needs and seeking behavior for detection of ovarian cancer by among Yabatech females in WITED (Women in Technical Education), Lagos State.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To know health information needs of females in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer.
2. Identified information sources consulted by females in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer.
3. Find out the problems females encounter in accessing information resources related to ovarian cancer.

Research Questions

1. What are the health information needs of females in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer?
2. What are the information sources consulted by females' in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer?
3. What are the problems affecting the satisfaction of the information needs of females in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Survey research design was used because it allows the adoption the questionnaire for data collection. This made the data to be quantitative, easy to analyze and helps in appropriate deduction of inferences. The total population of the study was 520. It consisted of Yabatech staff females in WITED (Women in Technical Education), Lagos State. Since the entire population was manageable, there was no need for sample size; thus the total enumerative sampling technique or census of all the 520 females were used for the study. *The researchers developed and used a questionnaire titled "Information Needs and Seeking Behavior for Detection of Ovarian Cancer among Females (INSBDOCAF).* Out of the 520 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 464 copies were correctly filled, representing 89.23% response rate used for the study analysis. The copies of the questionnaire were personally administered with the help of research assistants. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed and collected by the researchers and research assistants by hand. The data for the study was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation as presented below.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What are the health information needs of females as it relates to early detection of ovarian cancer?

Table 1: Mean ratings of Yabatech staff females in WITED, Lagos State on their health information needs in early detection of ovarian cancer.

S/N	ITEMS	Older N= 348			Younger N=116		
		\bar{x}_O	SD_O	Decision	\bar{x}_y	SD_y	Decision
1.	Personal risk of ovarian cancer	3.84	.37	Agreed	3.87	.33	Agreed
2.	Causes of ovarian cancer	3.65	.54	Agreed	3.56	.55	Agreed
3.	Symptoms of women with ovarian cancer	3.68	.53	Agreed	3.71	.45	Agreed
4.	Health habits that might lower ovarian cancer risk among women	3.77	.42	Agreed	3.66	.62	Agreed

5.	Relevant information on ovarian cancer management	3.39	.70	Agreed	3.33	.92	Agreed
6.	Managing fear associated with ovarian cancer occurrence among women	3.42	.75	Agreed	3.45	.71	Agreed
7.	Physical appearance or signs of ovarian cancer among women	3.49	.66	Agreed	3.25	.83	Agreed
8.	Ovarian cancer action in the body of a victim	3.39	.74	Agreed	3.48	.61	Agreed
9.	Implication of ovarian cancer	3.61	.48	Agreed	3.50	.65	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.58	0.57	Agreed	3.53	0.63	Agreed

The presented data on Table 1 above indicated that the respondents agreed to the responses/items in the table presented. The older women mean ranged from 3.39 to 3.84 while the younger women ranged from 3.25 to 3.87. The older and younger women have grand mean ratings of 3.58 and 3.53 as well as standard deviations of 0.57 and 0.63 respectively. This shows the, the respondents strongly agreed to the items on Table 1 as to the health information needs of women in Yabatech.

Research Question 2:

What are the information sources consulted by Yabatech females in WITED, Lagos State in connection with early detection of ovarian cancer?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the married and unmarried females on the information sources consulted in respect to early detection of ovarian cancer.

S/N	ITEMS	Married N= 348			Unmarried N= 116		
		\bar{x}_m	SD_m	Decision	\bar{x}_{um}	SD_{um}	Decision
Interpersonal sources							
1.	Family members	3.31	.82	Agreed	3.56	.77	Agreed
2.	Friends/co-workers	3.19	.78	Agreed	3.55	.66	Agreed
3.	Face to face support groups	2.46	1.04	Disagreed	2.91	1.28	Agreed
4.	Online support groups	2.18	.97	Disagreed	2.19	1.22	Disagreed
5.	Other cancer patients	2.56	.82	Agreed	2.96	1.06	Agreed
6.	Telephone hotlines	2.62	1.18	Agreed	3.06	1.21	Agreed
Media Sources:							

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7.	Television	3.28	.94	Agreed	3.61	.82	Agreed
8.	Radio	3.42	.78	Agreed	3.68	.64	Agreed
9.	Books, brochures, pamphlets	3.26	.83	Agreed	3.24	.92	Agreed
10.	Newspapers & magazines	3.49	.75	Agreed	3.60	.70	Agreed
11.	Internet sources	3.60	.68	Agreed	3.44	.78	Agreed
12.	Posters/handbills	3.26	.80	Agreed	2.94	.90	Agreed
13.	Personal doctor	3.39	.78	Agreed	3.56	.72	Agreed
14.	Other health professionals	3.19	.87	Agreed	3.77	.51	Agreed
15.	Medical books	2.77	.86	Agreed	2.87	1.19	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.06	0.86	Agreed	3.26	0.88	Agreed

The data presented on Table 2 above revealed that the respondents did not all agree to the information sources consulted. The married females' mean ranged from 2.18 to 3.60 but disagreed with the unmarried females' on the consultation of face to face support groups for information, while the unmarried females' mean ranged from 2.19 to 3.77.

However, both the "married and unmarried females disagreed on the use of online support groups as a source of information to the early detection of ovarian cancer". The married and unmarried females have grand mean ratings of 3.06 and 3.26 as well as corresponding standard deviations of 0.86 and 0.88 respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the problems affecting the satisfaction of the information needs of females in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer?

Table 3: Mean ratings of older and younger females on the problems affecting the satisfaction of their information needs in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer.

S/N	ITEMS	Older N= 348		Decision	Younger N= 116		Decision
		\bar{x}_o	SD_o		\bar{x}_y	SD_y	
	Challenges facing the satisfaction of women information needs on cancer						
1.	Lack of skills to find health information needs.	3.71	.51	Agreed	3.76	.42	Agreed
2.	Reports of information sources problems	3.61	.48	Agreed	3.79	.40	Agreed
3.	Unfamiliarity of information sources in libraries	3.58	.55	Agreed	3.47	.60	Agreed
4.	Lack of Knowledge about library operations	3.52	.56	Agreed	3.47	.60	Agreed
5.	Inadequate medical sources of information.	3.58	.55	Agreed	3.56	.60	Agreed

6.	Some of the information written in other languages affects the satisfaction level of women	3.45	.66	Agreed	3.26	.60	Agreed
7,	Lack of ICT devices skills	3.65	.59	Agreed	3.54	.64	Agreed
Grand Mean/SD		3.58	0.56	Agreed	3.55	0.55	Agreed

Data on Table 3 above shows that the respondents agreed to all the items in the table presented. The older females mean ranged from 3.45 to 3.71 while the younger females mean range from 3.26 to 3.79. The older and younger females have grand mean ratings of 3.58 and 3.55 as well as standard deviations of 0.56 and 0.55 respectively. Thus, the respondents (Yabatech females in WITED) agreed that the items on table 3 are problems affecting their information needs satisfaction in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer.

FINDINGS

It was found out that females are in serious need of different and accurate information as related to early detection of ovarian cancer. The responses revealed that both the older and younger females agreed that they need health information about their personal health risk for ovarian cancer. These includes, information about causes of ovarian cancer, physical symptoms, health habits that might lower the risk for ovarian cancer, information about group to attend for support and relevant information, information about managing fear of occurrence, physical nature of ovarian cancer, how ovarian cancer acts in the body and sexual implication of ovarian cancer.

It was also found out here that “married and unmarried females did not consult the same source of information as regards the early detection of ovarian cancer”. The responses revealed that both married and unmarried females agreed that they consult information sources such as the family members, friends/co-workers, cancer patients, telephone hotlines, television, radio, books, brochures, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, internet sources, posters/handbills, personal doctor, health professionals and medical books. Females, both married and unmarried however disagreed to the fact that online support group is not part of the information sources consulted. Moreover, the married females also do not consult face to face support group while the unmarried group consult face to face support groups. The result of this findings relates with the findings of Ankem (2006), who posited that medical professionals provide information to patients while caring for them, in addition to conveying oral information during interactions with health care professionals, present their knowledge to consumers through pamphlets, web sites, medical books and articles in journals among others.

Findings on the problems facing Yabatech females in WITED in relation to the satisfaction of their information needs on ovarian cancer, showed that the older and younger respondents agreed that they encounter similar problems in getting satisfied with desired information needs in relation to early detection of ovarian cancer. The findings revealed that the problems encountered by the respondents in satisfying their health information needs include; not finding specific health information needed, conflicting reports of information sources, unfamiliarity with the organization of information sources in libraries, inadequate knowledge of library system, inadequate knowledge about medical sources, language barrier and lack of computer literacy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the interpretation and discussion of findings of this study as they affect the research questions of the study, the following conclusions were made. This study has shown that “females both older and younger women need information to address their health needs as regards early detection of ovarian cancer”.

Females “both married and unmarried at some point consult various information sources in respect to early detection of ovarian cancer that would help them with the knowledge for effective management of ovarian cancer to ensure that they live a quality life”. However, their inability to access specific and quality health information, hinders the process especially in areas of: inadequate knowledge of the library system and organization of information sources as well as language barriers and inability to utilize the computer systems affects effective information services delivery on ovarian cancer. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Government/management should encourage policies for the provision of quality health information services in Yabatech, Lagos State and beyond.
2. Libraries should make information resources on health-related matters readily available to patrons.
3. Social media at this age of information communication technology should be used by information centres/libraries to disseminate health information to users to facilitate wider coverage among others.

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