

ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S ATTITUDE TO BROADCAST MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Cervical cancer has become a serious health concern among women in Akwa Ibom State, and the mass media are supposed to sensitise the public on the prevention of the disease. This study examined the influence of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention among women in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design with structured questionnaire as research instrument. The study centred on three local government areas of Eket, Ikot Ekpene and Uyo with a projected total female population of 592, 890. The sample size for the study was 400 respondents. The major findings revealed that 57% of the respondents did not adopt cervical prevention measures arising from low exposure (42%) to broadcast media campaigns on the menace. The study concluded that women's exposure to broadcast media campaigns and access to health information on cervical cancer prevention was low. It therefore recommended that broadcast media organisations in the state should step up their campaigns on cervical cancer prevention among women while the government, non-governmental organisations should increase their sponsorship of the campaigns on cervical cancer prevention.

Key words: Broadcast Media, Campaigns, Cervical Cancer, Prevention, Women

Introduction

Cervical cancer is peculiar to women of reproductive age and it is a condition where the cervix that lies below the neck of the womb of a woman is infected leading to serious pains and bleeding. It is caused by human papilloma virus (HPV) which is said to occur during sexual intercourse; usually contracted by women that were exposed to early sexual intercourse. If the virus remains in the vagina of the woman for a long time, it turns into cancer of the cervix. It is one of the most preventable cancers in human history. There is scientific and research evidence about human papilloma virus (HPV) being a significant risk factor for cervical cancer. Additionally, the HPV infected women might be at increased risk for developing cervical neoplasia (Al-Meer *et al.*, 2011).

Infection of the cervix can be identified, before it turns into cancer, by a pap smear (cytological examination) and has been shown to be very effective at reducing cancer by 75-90%. It is suggested however that nearly all cervical cancer (90% or more) is preventable if women participate in and are screened for good quality cytological screening programmes. There are a number of medical advisory services which have recommended screening or pap smear for every sexually active woman. In fact, women who have a condition affecting their cervix should get a pap test at least once every three years if they are still sexually active. According to Lawal *et al.* (2023), cervical cancer screening is the most effective public health intervention for cervical cancer control, which has drastically reduced the burden of the disease in high-income countries but the reverse is the case in low-and middle-income countries. This low uptake of the cervical cancer screening could possibly be explained by poor communication between healthcare providers and patients regarding access and benefits of screening. In many developing countries, little is known about cervical cancer amongst women. In some of the African countries including Nigeria, knowledge of the risk factors and prevention measures against cervical cancer is low (Lawal *et al.*, 2023).

The mass media are veritable tools for the promotion of public health because that they can reach large population of people with health promotion messages through routine use of electronic media such as television and radio (Olubunmi *et al.*, 2016). In the same vein, Bassey (2020) notes that “through its news programmes, documentaries, special reports, panel discussions, phone-in programmes and talk shows, radio broadcast has alerted the citizens on everyday issues and events of popular concern,” (p.230). According to Quattrin and Brusaferrro (2015), public health programmes should use the mass media to promote positive health behaviours.

The role of the broadcast media in the information collection and dissemination process is inevitable in our contemporary socio-political milieu. For instance, Bassey (2019, p.219) posits that radio broadcast medium “is easy to acquire and operate, and it does not suffer linguistic and language constraints. Radio is portable and people can listen to it while they are driving, eating, cooking, playing or reading unlike other mass media organs.”According to Udoudo and Nwanmereni (2016), the mass media, especially in developing countries, have become a critical stakeholder in the drive towards solving development needs.

Every year the Medical Women Association of Nigeria (MWAN), Akwa Ibom State branch organises a Cancer Awareness Walk and a Pink Charity Ball during World Cancer Day celebration. Oftentimes the representatives of the relevant Ministries, Agencies and Organisations were always present during the exercise. The annual celebration by MWAN usually witnessed the screening for cervical cancer for women without any cost. HPV Vaccine against cervical cancer was rolled out in Akwa Ibom State Government in August, 2023. Free cervical cancer screening exercise on women was already being conducted by some voluntary organisations such as Rotary Club of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. What is the level of awareness and consciousness of women on the knowledge of cervical cancer and its prevention in Akwa Ibom State with all these activities? Although the broadcast media are used to disseminate cervical cancer information among women, preliminary observation revealed that most women are not adhering to the instructions given by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Ministry of Health, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and other health related agencies resulting from false perception of cancer as being incurable (Lawal *et al.*, 2023). Hence this study set out to assess the impact of broadcast media campaigns on the knowledge and attitude of the women towards cervical cancer prevention in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The media have been utilised for the dissemination of information on health issues such as cervical cancer, wrong use of medication, female genital mutilation (FGM), Roll back malaria campaign, HIV/AIDS and Ebola virus in Nigeria. According to Okoli *et al.*(2018), exposure of women to cervical cancer broadcast campaigns, the awareness level of the disease, its causes, symptoms and prevention is low. If media campaigns are not intensified on the cervical cancer prevention, the likely consequence would be minimal or no uptake of cervical cancer prevention measures among the targeted women population. Idowu *et al.* (2016) assert that the primary determinants of low uptake of cervical cancer screening in Nigeria are poor awareness of the disease, lack of knowledge about screening and negative attitudes. This implies that there is need for intensive campaigns on cervical cancer prevention to reduce the effect illiteracy, negative cultural orientation and belief system on public health. The broadcast media should be at the forefront of this campaign given their ability to break literacy barrier, combining sight and sound with appealing storytelling formats. It is against this backdrop that this study poses the question: To what extent have broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention influenced women in Akwa Ibom State?

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were to:

- i. Find out the level of awareness of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention among women in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State;

- ii. ascertain the extent to which women have adopted cervical cancer prevention measures as a result of broadcast media campaigns in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State;
- iii. find out the level of satisfaction of women with broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State;
- iv. examine the extent to which broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention have influenced the attitudes of women toward the disease in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent are women in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State aware of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer?
- ii. To what extent have women adopted cervical cancer prevention measures as a result of broadcast media campaigns in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. Are women in Akwa Ibom State satisfied with the level of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State?
- iv. What is the extent of influence of broadcast media campaigns on women's knowledge and attitude toward cervical cancer prevention in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State?

Literature Review

Broadcast media are very effective in influencing people's opinion. Radio as a broadcast medium has become part of the people and communities. According to Hasan (2013), radio as a mass media

organ is cheap and readily available. It is able to defy literacy and geographical barriers while television on the other hand offered real time visual storytelling, shaping public opinion and cultural imagination. Broadcasting has revolutionised lives and made human communication fascinating.

The whole range of different electronic media used for communication, transmission and broadcasting to the people or masses is known as broadcast media. These involve a variety of audio-visual resources, electronic / electromagnetic media for the purpose of disseminating information, news, entertainments, ads and more to the targets or public audience. The main role of the broadcasting media is to disseminate information rapidly and communicate instantly with the public. Television, radio, films, live streaming, internet media (podcasts, websites, blog, slides and video) are some of the common examples of broadcasting media.

Mass Media and Health Communication Campaigns

Public health communication and information management refers to the way of presenting health information in an ethical manner that enhances public trust and makes public health intervention acceptable to the populace (Bassey & Okon, 2023). Health communication can take the form of disease prevention, health promotion, health care policy, health care business or the quality of life and health of the population in the community. According to Gautam (2017), health communication is an art and science of informing, influencing and motivating individuals, institutional and/or public audiences on health issues of importance. The mass media are important in disseminating information and creating awareness to the community, both urban and rural. Bassey and Umoren (2022) posit that the mass media have the onerous task of providing timely, relevant and accurate information to assist the citizens to guard against risky behaviours and remain infection-free. Gautam (2017) explains that health promotion campaign involves a planned

process; and the effectiveness of this planned process comes to fruition when the audience act on or comply with the information sent out.

Communication Strategy is how programme planners and implementers are able to address challenges to communication; and how the planned communication programmes are being communicated to the target audience (WHO, 2015). For the last few decades communication campaigns have been implemented in an effort to influence diverse health behaviours of the masses. The most outstanding health campaigns have been in relation to: tobacco use and heart disease prevention, alcohol and illegal drug use, cancer screening and prevention, sex-related behaviour, prevention and treatment of malaria. These campaigns have usually been aired through the news media, aimed at having a wide reach, mainly via television or radio (Oyeduntan *et al.*, 2020).

Media campaigns can be conducted for a brief period of time or they can last for a long time. They can be done as standalone and can also be integrated into other programme components in the form of clinical outreach, institutional outreach activities or as part of policy changes (Oyeduntan *et al.*, 2020). According to Kotler and Lee (2008), if health campaigns are embedded within wider social marketing programmes, there might be multiple ways to spread the messages of health campaigns. The effect of mass media campaign, which is to get well-focused, behaviour oriented message to a large group of people over a period of time, with incidental (low cost per head) cannot be over-emphasized.

Most efforts made by governments to reduce and improve health behaviour of Nigerians come in form of campaigns, and according to Bassey (2021), the mass media have the obligation to raise the consciousness of the citizens on issues such as health challenges through monitoring and reportage as well as holding the individuals, communities, organisations and the government

accountable. People all over the world are exposed to information about their immediate and distant environments through the mass media (Lee, 2005; Tsfaty & Cohen, 2013). Of course, such information shape people's opinions and perception about the world, but more importantly, it equally raises question as to why people choose to believe a piece of information and not the others (Egielewa, 2020). Dissemination of health information by the mass media is not done haphazardly. Bassey and Okon (2023) aver that health information management is a well thought-out approach to inform and influence individuals and communities through exchange of ideas, techniques and knowledge of health issues. There is a long tradition of public health campaigns using mass media and such campaigns reach a large percentage of the population regularly. Public health information campaign is the release of information on health issues to the public within a specific period with structured and organised set of communication activities; containing various messages in different channels with the aim of achieving non-commercial benefits for the individual and the society (Rice & Atkin, 2012).

Review of Empirical Studies

In a study titled, effectiveness of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer among women in Imo State, Nigeria, conducted by Okoli *et al.* (2018), the researchers assessed the level of exposure to media messages on cervical cancer among women in Owerri North Local Government Area. The study surveyed 200 respondents as sample size and the major findings revealed that majority of the women were not exposed to cervical cancer broadcast campaigns and the awareness level of the disease, its causes, symptoms and prevention was low. The study therefore recommended a multi-media approach to the cervical cancer prevention campaigns.

In another study conducted by Lawal *et al.* (2023) on cervical cancer burden in Nigeria, a total of 15 studies were reviewed using 12 thematic areas related to cervical cancer prevention and

treatment in Nigeria. The results revealed that in Ibadan, South West Nigeria, only 13.5% of the women studied have ever had cervical cancer screening. In urban slums in Lagos, former capital of Nigeria, the awareness rate was 12.8% while a cross-sectional study of Nigeria's geopolitical zones showed that only 32.7% of women have heard of cervical cancer. The study then recommended that cancer awareness creation is a fundamental step in the cancer control programme. These two empirical studies centred on media campaigns and cervical cancer awareness level of women. But this particular study goes a step further to examine the attitudes of women in Akwa Ibom State towards the cervical cancer campaigns given their exposure to broadcast media.

Theoretical Framework

The study made use of two theories of Health Belief Model and Perception. The Health Belief Model first came into existence in 1950 as a result of the work of Godfrey Hochbaum, Irwin Rosenstock and Stephen Kegels working in the United States health screening programme. It is a psychological model that helps to explain and predict health behaviour of individuals. The model operates on the following assumptions:

- i. Health behaviours (preventive or curative) are a product of an internal (perception, beliefs, knowledge) reaction or an external (mass media, interpersonal communication) reaction which stimulates the desire to engage in the behaviour.
- ii. This will depend on the individual's "cost benefit" and will vary according to the behaviour of the individual, based on their motivation. It is obvious that one thinks about the benefits of an action before engaging in such action.
- iii. The individual may be motivated to do something based on his beliefs, and his own opinion on his ability to do it. This model is relevant to this study because the women in Akwa Ibom State

can only respond to cervical cancer campaigns when they are properly exposed to the health implications of not embracing screening and other preventive measures.

The second framework upon which this work is anchored is perception theory. The theory was propounded in 1964 by Berelson and Steiner. Perception is a process that has been described by Uzah and Nyiwo (2019), as the meaningful and coherent picture or image of the world and is a multi-component process involving selection, organisation and integration of sensory information. Bassey (2020a) posits that the basic assumption of this theory is that perception relies on selection of symbols from the language shared with others and meanings for symbols learned from past experience. It is the process of making sense from our world.

The following are the prime principles of perception theory:

- i. Selective Perception: People take in the information that is relevant to them and their objectives.
- ii. Contextual Influence: There is an influence of the environment, culture and society in the perception.
- iii. Top-Down Processing: Higher level mental processes guide sensory input interpretation.
- v. Bottom- Up Processing: Basic sensory features build up to complex representations.
- vi. Active Construction: Perception is an active process influenced by past experiences and expectations.

Perception theory is central to the understanding of communication process. It offers the following functions:

- i. Perception theory explains how individuals interpret messages based on their unique experiences, biases and expectations;

- ii. The sender encodes the messages and the receiver decodes the messages in terms of his/her perception of reality.
- iii. Perception theory helps to identify potential noise and distortion in communication, leading to misinterpretation;
- iv. Perception is influenced by context, culture, and social environment;
- v. Selective Perception: Individuals selectively attend to and process information based on their interests and goals;
- vi. Feedback and Clarification: Perception theory emphasizes the importance of feedback to clarify intended meaning.

The theory is applicable to the present study since it is concerned with an individual's understanding of a message depending on his or her past experiences, biases and expectations. People's interests and aspirations will influence the way they listen and learn; and this will differ depending on the context, culture and social environment that they operate.

The adoption of these theories is justified by their applicability and capacity to explain how people react to health-related messages, especially those that are broadcast via the media. Based on the women's perceptions of the inherent danger of cervical cancer, the Health Belief Model (HBM) provides important information about the disease's severity, susceptibility, perceived advantages of prevention, and perceived obstacles to prevention. It also provides a measure of self-efficacy and cues to action that are important to promote health-related behaviour. The HBM provides an explanation of how media campaigns exposure may affect women's decisions to get tested or take preventive measures in the context of this study.

Similarly, the perception theory plays a key role in examining how people internalise and interpret in the light of their past experiences, cultural background and pre-existing beliefs.

According to this theory, women's health decisions can be greatly influenced by how they interpret and process information received via television or radio about cervical cancer. The various socio-cultural factors and degree of access to the media may influence how health messages are received and implemented.

Methodology

The study used the survey approach as the research design. The instrument of questionnaire was used to get information from the respondents. The population of the study stood at 592,890 which is the total projected population of the three study areas (Eket with 163,649; Ikot Ekpene with 135,974 and Uyo with 293,267) as recorded by the State Bureau of Statistics in 2026. To get the sample size for the study, Yaro Yamane sampling formula was adopted from the population of 592,890 and the statistical formula used for the sampling was as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = the sample size

N= the given population

e= the level of significance or limit of tolerable error

1 = unit or a constant

With the population of 592, 890, the sample size of the study determined at 0.05 level of significance or tolerable limit of error is calculated thus:

$$\frac{592, 890}{1 + 592, 890 (0.05)^2}$$

$$= 592,890 \div 1,483 = 399.79$$

$$= 400$$

Based on the above calculations a total of 400 respondents were selected as the sample for the study. In selecting the subjects for the study, purposive sampling technique was used to administer the questionnaire. The total number of respondents chosen from the three (3) selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene were 196, 112 and 92 respectively based on the female population in each of the three local Government areas as at 2026. From the total of 400 copies of the questionnaire administered, 385 were properly filled and returned for analysis. About 15 copies of the questionnaire could not be retrieved for analysis. This result gave 96.3% return rate.

Result

The data obtained from the questionnaire administered were tabulated and analysed using simple percentage.

Objective 1: To determine women level of awareness of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Responses on women awareness of broadcast media campaign on cervical cancer prevention

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high level	100	26
High level	60	16
Low level	125	32
Very low level	100	26
Total	385	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Data gathered and presented in Table 1 show that a total of 225 respondents representing 58% had low level of awareness of the broadcast campaigns on cervical cancer prevention while 160 respondents representing 42% had awareness.

Objective 2: To ascertain the extent to which women have adopted cervical cancer prevention measures as a result of broadcast media campaigns in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Responses on women's adoption of cervical cancer prevention measures as a result of broadcast media campaigns

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high extent	80	21

High extent	85	22
Low extent	90	23
Very low extent	130	34
Total	385	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2 indicates that the respondents that had low level of adoption of cervical cancer prevention measures were 220 (57%) while 165 respondents (43%) indicated that they had high level of adoption of prevention measures on cervical cancer.

Objective 3: To find out women's satisfaction with broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention in Uyo, IkotEkpene and Eket Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Responses on women's satisfaction with broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly satisfied	90	23
Satisfied	80	21
Unsatisfied	115	30
Highly unsatisfied	100	26
Total	385	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Data on Table 3 reveal that a total of 215 respondents representing 56% were unsatisfied with the level of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention while 170 respondents accounting for 44% claimed that they were satisfied.

Objective 4: To examine the extent to which broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention have influenced the attitudes of women toward the disease in Uyo, IkotEkpene and Eket Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Responses on how broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention have influenced women's attitude toward the disease

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Very great extent	90	23
Great extent	77	20

Little extent	120	31
Very little extent	98	26
Total	385	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4 shows that 57% (218) of the respondents perceived that the broadcast campaigns had little impact on them when it comes to prevention of cervical cancer. No fewer than 167 respondents accounting for 43% agreed that their knowledge and attitude had been influenced by campaigns on cervical cancer prevention through the broadcast media.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of this study was to find out the level of awareness of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention among women in the three Local Government Areas of Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket of Akwa Ibom State. Data gathered and presented in Table 1 revealed that a total of 225 respondents representing 58% had low level of awareness of the broadcast campaigns on cervical cancer prevention while 160 respondents representing 42% had awareness. This implies that the level of cervical cancer prevention campaign launched through the broadcast media is low in the three study areas and women's exposure to the campaign is low. This finding corroborates Idowu *et al.*(2016); Lawal *et al.* (2023); Kumar and Tanya (2024) who concluded that majority of the women surveyed had poor knowledge regarding cervical cancer and screening services.

The second objective of the study was to find out whether the women in the Local Government Areas of Ikot Ekpene, Eket and Uyo of Akwa Ibom State have adopted prevention measures as a result of exposure to broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer. Information on Table 2 shows that a total of 220 respondents representing 57% of the study population had low

level of adoption of cervical cancer prevention measures while 165 respondents accounting for 43% claim to have high level of adoption of prevention measures on cervical cancer. This implies that the low level of media exposure has translated into minimal behavioural change among women with regard to cervical cancer prevention. This result corroborates Heenaet *al.* (2019) which indicated that there was high percentage of women in Africa without the knowledge of the cervical cancer and the importance of screening.

The third objective of the study was to find out the level of satisfaction of the women with the cervical cancer prevention broadcast media campaigns in the Local Government Areas of Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket in Akwa Ibom State. Data analysis presented on Table 3 revealed that a total of 215 respondents or 56% were not happy with the level of dissemination of the campaigns on cervical cancer prevention through broadcast media in the State while 170 respondents or 44% were satisfied. This finding suggests that the role that the broadcast media are playing in promoting the campaigns on cervical cancer prevention in Akwa Ibom state had been minimal. The implication of result is that the broadcast media may not have done much or maybe the campaigns were poorly designed and lack cultural context in messaging.

The fourth study objective was to ascertain women's attitude towards cervical cancer following broadcast media campaigns in Ikot Ekpene, Eket and Uyo local Government areas of Akwa Ibom State. Information analysed on Table 4 shows that a total of 218 respondents representing 57% claimed that the campaigns in the broadcast media on cervical cancer prevention had little impact on them. No fewer than 167 respondents or 43% of the study population agreed that the campaigns on cervical cancer prevention had impacted their knowledge and attitude towards the menace. The implication of this result is that broadcast campaigns on cervical cancer prevention have not made applicable impact on the women in Akwa Ibom State. The consequence

is that behavioural change and uptake of prevention measures of cervical cancer among Akwa Ibom State women is low. This outcome supports earlier research conducted by Gever and Ezeah (2020) that showed that individuals' health attitude and practices are dependent on the quality and quantity of health information that they have.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of broadcast media campaigns on cervical cancer prevention among women in Eket, Ikot Ekpene and Uyo Local Government Areas of Uyo of Akwa Ibom State. Findings from the data analysed revealed that the overall level of awareness of cervical cancer and its preventive measures remain significantly low among the female population in the selected Local Government Areas. It is therefore inferred that the broadcast media, despite the recognised potential, as effective tools for health communication and public enlightenment, have not created significant impact in this context.

The study further inferred that the low level of media exposure has led to low uptake of prevention measures and has translated into minimal behavioural change and poor attitude of women to cervical cancer prevention in Akwa Ibom State. Arising from the above conclusion, it is hereby recommended as follows:

- (i) Broadcast organisations in Akwa Ibom State should design awareness campaigns on cervical cancer prevention and make such campaigns accessible to women across different demographics using local languages, culturally relevant examples and simple health messages.
- (ii) Agencies of government, institutions and private sector organisations should partner the broadcast media outfits in the State to increase the frequency and the reach of media

- sensitisation and awareness programmes on cervical cancer prevention in women in Akwa Ibom State.
- (iii) Health institutions should work closely with the broadcast media to feature medical experts on regular programmes that will educate women on cervical cancer symptoms, screening procedures, and preventive measures. The broadcast programmes should allow for question-and- answer segments to engage the women and clarify misconceptions so as to facilitate uptake of prevention measures.
 - (iv) Broadcast media campaigns should incorporate testimonies of cervical cancer survivors, community health workers, and other relatable figures to build figures to build trust, reduce stigma, and humanise the message. Storytelling and dramatised format- such a radio drama and short documentaries – should be adopted to make the campaigns appealing and satisfactory among the womenfolk.

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