



Information Seeking Behaviour Of Nurses In Central Hospitals In Delta And Edo States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated seeking behavior of nurses in central hospitals in Delta and Edo states. A descriptive survey was adopted and questionnaire was the instrument used to obtain data. Four hundred (400) questionnaires were distributed while three hundred and ninety-one (391) were returned completed and used. Five (5) research questions were raised. The data collected were analyzed through the use of simple descriptive analysis of frequency counts, percentages and mean. The stated findings of this study are that nurses need information in the area of diagnosis, drug therapy, and health development/current medical treatment. Drug reference manual, other nurses and midwives and primary supervising physicians are the major resources nurses used frequently. Most of the nurse's studies indicated that they acquired their information search skills and use from friends and colleagues, health treatment manuals, computer/information training programmed and practical and self training. A majority of the respondents indicated that their information search skill is high. The study also revealed that most of the nurses indicated that frequent power outage, lack of search skills, high cost of internet access, inadequate materials in the library and no nearby library are some of the major challenges militating against them when seeking for information. The study recommends that government and the hospital management board should ensure that libraries with adequate materials and functioning internet facilities or center are established in various hospitals to meet the information needs of nurses and other staff of the hospital.

Keywords: Information needs, Information seeking behavior, nurses, central hospital

INTRODUCTION

Information is an important factor that can influence all people whether professionals or non-professionals, old or young. Every human needs information for progress decision making, professionalism, expertise and effective service delivery. Generally speaking, the concept of information is closely related to notion of constraint, communication, control, data, instruction, knowledge, meaning, mental stimulus, pattern, perception and representation (Wikipedia, 2012). Information seeking involves the search, retrieval, recognition and application of meaningful content. The search may be explicit or implicit. The retrieval may be the result of specific strategies or serendipity, the resulting information may be embraced or rejected, the entire experience may be carried out through to a logical conclusion or aborted in midstream and there may be a million other potential results (Kingrey, 2012). Information seeking has been viewed by Pendleton and chat man (1998) as cited by Eda (2015) as a cognitive exercise, social and cultural exchange, and discrete

strategies when confronting uncertainty and as a basic condition of humanity in which all individual exist. In fact they were of the view that information behavior may be appropriate term rather than informaking seeking, to best describe the multifaceted relationship of information in the lives of human beings, a relationship through formal information channels and variety of other attitudes and actions, including skepticism and ambivalence.

Information seeking behavior is as old as man because man since inception has been making inquiry into problems that confront him. That is why Makinde Jiyane & Mugwisi (2019) stated that the study of information behavior had developed since its inception during 1960's when most research was geared towards understanding how professionalism sought for information and the source they consulted. Information seeking behavior is the process of recognizing the need for information, searching for, using and sharing it. It is a purposive way of seeking for information in order to satisfy a need. That is why Eftekha & Hayati (2016) stated information seeking behavior exhibited by information users are derived from user's information when they have urge for information.

Information seeking behavior varies from one person to another and can be influenced by the qualification, institution where basic education was received, job ranking a form of employment and the environment in which information and technology (ICT) was used (iota, Azuma & Nishimura,2017).

With the exponential growth of media resources available online and other sources, health science librarians and other sources of information are better able to reach nurses at the point of care with resources now available on the patient units, libraries have the opportunities to focus on the information needs of practicing nurses, who represents a large segment of the clinical patron base. As greater emphasis is placed on evidence based practices, it is important to remember that nurses are integral to the delivery of health care and directly accountable for their practice (Wozar& Worona, 2023). In primary health care, each practitioner encounters more than 500 clinical topics in any year, so the information need is much broader than that of other health care personnel like nurses searching many resources for answer (Gonzalez-Gonzalez, 2017). Nurses need a wide variety of health resources to meet their health care needs. Due to time constraints, many of them prefer to obtain information from resources that are convenient, easy to use and reliable, professional colleagues and other health care providers especially physicians, who are favorite source for nursing information to print materials. Another group of preferred sources of information including nurse text books and journals (Dee & Stanley, 2015). Most nurse work in hospitals. They are responsible not only for following physician's orders and performing routine duties, but also for maintaining a constant surveillance of their patients, especially in a critical care unit. Nurses also gather and transmit information from the patient's family to other health care providers and sometimes even between the patients and patient's family. Hospital nurses are responsible for coordinating all the care of the patients in their charge (McKnight, 2006). As they go about their various duties, there is need to study their information seeking behavior which can help them to carry out their duties. Some studies have been carried out on information seeking behavior of undergraduate students, post graduate students, physicians; among others but only few have been done on information seeking behavior of nurses. The present study on information seeking behavior of nurses in central hospitals in Delta and Edo states when completed will fill this gap.

Statement of the Problem

Nurses are Key elements in the delivery of health care services to the general public in that they assist doctors in performing routine medical duties in the hospitals. Access and use of health related information among nurses is important to provide a high variety health issues. Nurses spend considerable time and efforts providing health care and medical treatment to patients. They need to use latest medical knowledge to support their health care practices as well as provide necessary information to patients and their families. Extensive medical research and development activities all over the world are resulting in the generation of enormous amount of health care literature, published in a variety of resources and at the rate that is impossible for individual medical professionals to keep up with it. In spite of the fact that we are in the era of information explosion, nurses seem to find it hard to meet their information needs. This may be due partly to the fact that nurses do not use most of the information nurses use when attending to patients is obtained from the memory and unfortunately, some out of date lack of information is capable of hampering qualitative service delivery to the general public thereby, endangering the lives of people. It is against this background that this study

attempts to investigate the information needs of nurses, frequency of use of information, ways they acquire their information, level of their information search skills and challenges they experience while seeking for information in Edo and Delta state.

Objective of the Study

This study is intended to find out the information seeking behavior of nurses in central hospitals in Delta and Edo states. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to:

1. Find out the information needs of nurses in central hospitals in Delta and Edo state.
2. Find out the frequency at which nurses in Delta and Edo state use different information channels/access point.
3. Find out how nurses in Delta and Edo state acquired their information search and use skills.
4. Find out the levels of information search skills of nurses in Delta and Edo states.
5. Find out the challenges the nurses in Delta and Edo states experience when seeking information.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study;

- i. What are the information needs of nurses in the central hospitals in Delta and Edo states?
- ii. How frequent do nurses in Delta and Edo state use information from various channels/access points?
- iii. How do nurses in Delta and Edo state acquire their information search and use skills?
- iv. What is the level of information search skills nurses in Delta and Edo state?
- v. What are the challenges militating against the information in Delta and Edo state?

Review of Related Literature

Nurses wherever they are found, work within the health care industry and promote the health of their patients. Nurses provides direct patient care of hospitals, daily regimen of recording patients vital signs such as blood pressure and ensure that medication are administered properly. For nurses to effectively carry out their duties, they need information for various purposes. Health information need is important for nurses to deliver their job effectively and efficiently. That is why the state of New Jersey(2004) cited by march 2020 posited that nurses need information to perform the duties required to take care of clients, carryout medical orders prescribed by licensed physicians that require an understanding of elementary nursing.

Turner, Starri, Revere & Altimore (2008) cited by March (2020) studied information needs and resource of public health nurses in a local health department. The population comprised of seventeen public health nurses at a local health department in Oregon. Semi structured in dept interview was conducted. The study was analyzed using constant comparative method to assess the information nurses sought and used in their work. It was discovered that the information needs of the nurses differed according to employee's position and roles. Anyanwu, Oparaku and Benson (2016) in their study on information needs of nurses for effective health care delivery in Nigeria with Federal Medical Center, Owerri. Descriptive survey method was adopted with a population of 300 from Federal medical center Owerri and the sample size of 171. The questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection; the data was analyzed using simple percentages and tables. It was found that nurses needed information to care and mange patients as well as improve their knowledge in clinical areas.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population is 2000 at the central hospital, Delta and Edo states from a sample size of 400(four hundred) was drawn.

Proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to select the nurses. Self structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire included a five point liker scale. Four hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered for a period of one month and at different shifts. 391 copies of the questionnaires were found valid for analysis. Data generated from the study was analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and mean to answer the research questions. These statistical tools were used because of the descriptive nature of the research.

Research Question Analyses

Research Question one

What are the information needs of nurses in central's hospitals in Edo and Delta States need information?

The data in Table 1 are used to answer this question

Table 1: Information needs of Nurses in the Central Hospitals in Delta and Edo States

Information Needs	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total		Mean(x)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
Diagnosis	262	67	72	18	37	10	20	5	391	100	1358	3.5
Drug therapy	255	65	83	21	47	12	6	2	391	100	1369	3.5
Continuing professional development opportunity	288	74	61	16	19	5	23	6	391	100	1396	3.6
Referral	199	51	50	13	82	21	60	15	391	100	1170	3.0
Psycho-socio information about patient	208	53	124	32	25	6	34	9	391	100	1288	3.3
Patients convalescence	205	52	121	31	38	10	27	7	391	100	1286	3.3
Medical information on the Internet	217	56	58	15	26	7	90	23	391	100	1184	3.0
Health development/c current medical treatment techniques	231	59	106	27	40	10	14	4	391	100	1336	3.4
Epidemiology	210	54	111	28	42	11	28	7	391	100	1285	3.3
Prognosis	215	55	144	37	7	2	25	6	391	100	1331	3.4

Table 1 shows the areas nurses in central hospitals in Delta and Edo states need information about. It is obvious from the table that 288 (74%) of the respondents with the mean score of 1396 (3.6) indicated that they need information for continuing professional development opportunity. A majority of the respondents 262(67%) with the mean score of 1358 (3.5) indicated that they also need information for diagnosis of ailment or diseases. The study also revealed that most of the nurses need information in the area of drug therapy with 255 (65%) and a mean score of 1369(3.5). It is also clear from the table that 231(59%) of the respondents with the mean score of 1336(3.4) indicated that they need information for health development/current medical treatment technique. This study corroborates with the work of Ajuwon (2006),who stated that the availability of information resources such as computers and internet,1-phones and 1-pad provided easy access to recent and reliable results of clinical research on everyday medical practice which nurses can access for improvement and acquire some knowledge of current medical treatment techniques and breakthroughs. The findings of this study also agree with the study of Cogdill (2003) who carried out a study on information related behaviour of nursing practitioners and revealed that most nurses frequently need information related to drug therapy and diagnosis.

Research Question Two

How frequently nurses use information resources to meet their needs?

The data on table 2 are used to provide answer to this question

Table 2: Frequency of use of information resources by Nurses

Information Resources	A few times a week or more		At least once a month		About once a year		Seldom		Undecided		Total		Mean(x)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
Journals	108	28	98	25	84	22	56	14	45	12	391	100	1343	3.4
Pharmacopocia/referee manual	266	68	76	19	23	59	15	4	11	3	391	100	1733	4.4
Medical database	98	25	96	25	77	20	88	23	32	8	391	100	1313	3.6
Television	215	55	96	25	48	12	30	8	7	2	391	100	1670	4.1
Radio	227	58	94	24	53	14	7	2	10	3	391	100	1684	4.3
Primary supervising physicians	234	60	63	16	89	23	-	-	5	1	391	100	1694	4.3
Other nurses/Midwives	248	63	88	23	55	14	--	--	--	--	391	100	1757	4.5
Textbooks	220	56	78	20	67	17	18	5	8	2	391	100	1657	4.2
Personal	78	20	109	28	68	17	97	25	39	10	391	100	1263	3.2
e-book/e-journal	69	18	40	10	65	17	92	24	125	32	391	100	1009	2.6
Drug representative	119	30	111	28	76	19	65	17	20	5	391	100	1417	3.6
Teleconferencing	98	25	136	35	66	17	91	23	--	--	391	100	1404	3.6
Internet	208	53	93	24	55	14	28	7	7	2	391	100	1640	4.2
National library of medicine resources	100	26	10	3	6	2	99	25	176	45	391	100	932	2.4
Primary care online	105	27	44	11	99	25	78	20	65	17	391	100	1219	3.1
MD consult	116	30	102	26	62	16	-	-	11	3	391	100	1185	3.0
Cumulative index to nursing and allied health	212	54	94	24	45	12	38	10	2	1	391	100	1647	4.2

Table 2 presents the information resources nurses use frequently. Thus: Pharmacopoeia /referee manual ranked first with 1733 (4.4) mean score and 266(68%) respondents consulting it a few times a week or more. Consultation of other Nurses/Midwives ranked second with 1757 (4.5) mean score and

248 (63%) respondents. A majority of the respondents with the mean score of 1694(4.3) and 234 (60%) indicated they also consult primary supervising physicians frequently for information. This is followed by radio with 1684 (4.3) and 227(58%) respondents used it for relevant information few times a week or more. This study is in conformity with the study of Dee and Stanley (2016) who revealed that nurses rely on colleagues and books for medical information. This study is also in agreement with the study of Cogdill (2013) who posited that the information resources nurses used most frequently were in consultations with colleagues, drug reference manuals, textbooks and protocol manual. However, this study is also in contrast with the study of Dee and Stanley (2005) who reported from a study that other resources nurses frequently cited included personal digital assistants, electronic journals and drug representatives

Research Question Three

How do nurses acquire information search and use skills?

The data in Table 3 are used to answer this question.

Table 3: How nurses acquire their information search and use skills

How nurses acquire their information search and use skills	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total		Mean	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
Health/treatment manuals	290	74	74	19	27	7	391	100	1045	2.7
Reading of information technology books	136	35	80	21	175	45	391	100	743	1.9
Trial and error	170	44	99	25	122	31	391	100	830	2.1
Practical/self teaching	213	55	70	18	108	28	391	100	887	2.3
Computer/information training programme	220	56	98	25	73	19	391	100	929	2.4
Friends/colleagues	300	77	57	15	34	9	391	100	1048	2.7

Table 3 shows the how nurses acquire their information search and use skills. A total of 300 (77%) respondents with 1048(2.7) mean score indicated that they acquire their information search and use skills from friends/ colleagues. This is followed by health/treatment manual 290 (74%) respondents with1045 (2.7) mean score. Another major way nurses acquire their information search and use skills is through computer/information training programme 220(56%) respondents with 929 (2.4) mean score. A majority of the respondents 213(55%) and 887(2.3) mean score also indicated that they acquire their information search and use skills through practical/self-teaching. This study correlates the study of Merknigh (2006)who opines that nurses got their information skills from colleagues, and nurses' notes in the patients' charts they read. This study also corroborates the work of Pakenhan-Walsh, Priestley and Smith(1997) who opined that computer and information training programme would enable nurses develop internet search skills which is a sine qua non and vital asset to any healthcare system development.

Research Question Four

What is the Level of nurse's information search skills?

The data in table 4 is used to answer this question

Table 4: Level of nurses' information search skills

Levels	No	%
Very high	98	25
High	205	52
Average	44	11
Low	30	8
Very low	14	4
Total	391	100

Table 4 shows the levels of nurses' information search skills. However, High attracted the highest responses of 205(52%) while very high 98(25%) came second. This clearly indicates that the respondents rated their information search skills high.

Research Question five

What are the challenges nurses' experiences while seeking information?

The data in Table 5 were used to answer this question

Table 4.5: Challenges of information-seeking by nurses'

Challenge of information Search Skills	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total		Mean	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	X
Lack of search skills	300	77	29	7	32	8	30	8	391	100	1381	3.5
Lack of computer/i-phones/i-pad	108	28	100	26	97	25	86	22	391	100	1004	2.6
No time	109	28	91	23	82	21	109	28	391	100	982	2.5
High cost of Internet access	296	76	50	13	14	4	31	8	391	100	1393	3.6
No nearby library	278	71	69	18	36	9	8	2	391	100	1399	3.6
High cost of information resources	271	69	51	13	65	17	4	1	391	100	1371	3.5
frequent power outages	310	79	17	4	18	5	46	12	391	100	1373	3.5
Slow internet response	227	58	34	9	49	12	81	21	391	100	1189	3.1
Inadequate material in library	290	74	65	17	27	7	9	2	391	100	1419	3.6

Table 5 presents the challenges nurses encounter while seeking information. A total of 310 (79%) of the respondents with 1373 (3.5) mean score indicated that frequent power outage is one of the major challenges they faced when seeking information. This finding agrees with Oduwole and Akpati (2003) who stated in their study that power supply outages in Nigeria is one major problem to information accessibility.

However, majority of the respondents also indicated that lack of search skills 300(77%) respondents with 1381 (3.5) mean score is another major challenge to information seeking. Another major challenge is high cost of Internet access 296(76%) with 1393 (3.6) mean score. One major challenge militating against information seeking by nurses is inadequate materials in the library 290 (74%) with 1419(3.6) mean score. A majority of the respondents also indicated that no nearby library 278 (71%) and with the 1399(3.6)-mean score. This is in conformity with Ajuwon (2006)who stressed that due to

funding constraints, many libraries in Nigeria are no longer able to meet the needs of users in terms of providing new and recent materials. He further emphasized that Internet access is still a major challenge in Nigeria as majority of the people including nurses cannot afford the high initial cost of personal computers and connection fees. The study also agrees with Sitzia (2002) who reported that nurses identified the lack of search skills and knowledge as a barrier they faced when seeking for information.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that information is crucial to nurses in their day-to-day activities. Nurses need information to carry out their duties of diagnosis, drug therapy and also keep abreast with current medical treatment. Most nurses consult drug reference manual, their colleagues and supervising physicians frequently in order to acquire the needed information to perform their function. It was also discovered from the study that most nurses use their colleagues or friends, mass media and personal collection frequently as information resources.

A majority of the nurses acquired their information search and use skills from their friends, health treatment manuals, practical and self-training and computer/information training programme. However, power outage, lack of information search skills, high cost of internet access, inadequate materials in the library are some of the challenges militating against seeking behaviour of most nurses in central hospital Delta and Edo states.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Government should do everything within their disposal to solve the problem of epileptic power supply situation in the country, while the Hospital Management Board should provide and ensure that the alternative power supply is constantly maintained and functioning
- ii. Government and the Hospital Management Board should ensure that libraries with adequate materials and functioning internet facilities or centre are established in various hospitals to meet the information needs of nurses and other staff of the hospital.
- iii. Government and Internet service providers should dialogue to proffer solution to the high cost of Internet accessibility that is preventing more than half of the citizenry including nurses from having access to current and more reliable information resources.
- iv. Nurses should use other information channels such as the library and the Internet to meet their information need rather than depending largely on their colleagues.
- v. Government should do everything within their disposal to solve the problem of epileptic power supply situation in the country while the hospital management Board should provide and ensure that the alternative power supply is constantly maintain and functioning.

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