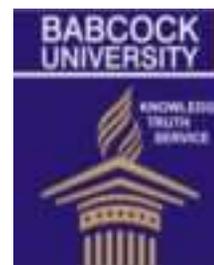




Available online @ www.actasatech.com

acta SATECH 12 (1):41 – 46 (2020)



Knowledge and attitude of adult men towards childlessness in Southern Nigeria

*Aina, F. O¹.; Dada, S.O². and Sanni, N.F¹.

¹ Department of Maternal and Child Health, School of Nursing, Babcock University

² Office of Research, Innovation and International Cooperation, Babcock University

Corresponding author < AinaF@babcock.edu.ng >

Abstract

Childlessness has been a social issue of great concern in the society because of its negative effect on individuals, family and the society at large. These effects may have personal, social, emotional or political significance which include broken home, depression and domestic violence. This study investigates the knowledge and attitude of adult men towards childlessness in Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Idi Aba, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

This descriptive cross-sectional study utilised a validated questionnaire. Reliability of the questionnaire was done through Cronbach Alpha measure. A coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. A total enumeration sampling method was adopted to include 300 adult men attending general outpatient department in FMC, Abeokuta. However, a total of 218 gave informed consent and were the ones used as for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics at $P < 0.05$.

The mean respondents' age was 35.4 ± 5.2 . Majority (42.0) were Christian and 40.0% were Muslims. While 59.0% were unemployed, 73.0% were single. The mean attitude score was 16.5 ± 3.5 . Majority (74.0%) of the respondents had negative attitude while 26.0% had positive attitude towards childlessness. Results also showed that majority (54.0%) of the respondents had moderate knowledge about childlessness.

The moderate knowledge documented in this study did not translate in to positive attitude among the respondents. A holistic health intervention such as health education and enlightenment should be carried out among men so as to change their attitude towards childlessness and see the health condition as not only women problem.

Keywords: Adult men, Attitude, Childlessness, Knowledge.

1.0 Introduction

Childlessness has been a social issue of serious concern in the society because of its negative effect on individuals, family and the society at large. Childlessness is the state of having no child and it may have personal, social or political significance because most people want and expect to have

children. Infertility happens when a couple cannot conceive after having regular unprotected sex. It may be that one partner cannot contribute to conception, or that a woman is unable to carry a pregnancy to full term. It is often defined as not conceiving after 12 months of regular sexual intercourse without the use

of birth control (Nordquist, 2018). The World Health Organization recommends the epidemiological definition of infertility, which is the inability to conceive within two years of exposure to pregnancy. Childlessness has major psychological and social implications for affected persons, especially in settings where fertility is highly valued (Rasak & Oladipo 2018). Developing countries experience negative consequences of childlessness to a greater degree when compared with Western societies.

Regardless of the medical cause of infertility, women receive the major blame for the reproductive setback and they suffer personal grief and frustration, social stigma, ostracism and serious economic deprivation. Throughout the world and particularly in African societies, the word “childlessness” sends interest to the ears of listener and a sense of pity is immediately aroused in the mind. Infertility is regarded as a major life crisis that has the potential to threaten the stability of individuals and relationship (Ashraf, Ali & Azadeh, 2014). Childlessness was usually blamed on the woman and this in itself added to the high level negative emotional and social effects of childlessness. Also, there is usually marital instability including fear of the husband taking a second wife, divorce and physical abuse by partner (Rasak & Oladipo 2018). According to Ola (2017), men aspire to parenthood as much as women do but have limited knowledge about the factors that influence fertility which in turn affect their attitude towards childlessness. Childlessness in the Africa settings has severe health and social implications especially for women. Existing research relating to childbearing focuses almost exclusively on women, whereas childbearing and parenting are shared endeavours (Hammerberg, Collinc, Holden, Young & McLachlan, 2017). Therefore, understanding men's knowledge and attitude towards childbearing decision-making is crucial to inform fertility and family-related social policy and health promotion as well as public education initiatives to help women and men achieve their parenthood goals.

Methodology

Study design

Descriptive research design was adopted to assess knowledge and attitude of adult men towards childlessness in Federal Medical Centre, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.

Target population

The target population were 300 adult men attending general outpatient department of FMC, Abeokuta, Ogun State which was obtained from two week clinic record of attendance in the setting

Sample size and sampling technique

Total enumeration method was adopted to include 300 adult men attending general outpatient department in FMC, Abeokuta which was obtained from two weeks clinic record of attendance in the setting. A total of 218 gave informed consent and were the ones used as for the study.

Validity and reliability of instrument

Validity of the research instrument was ascertained through peer review and by experts in the field of maternal and child health to ascertain the face and content validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined in General Hospital Ijaye, Abeokuta through split-half method using 30 respondents and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.75

Data collection procedure

A written letter of intent was written to the Chief Medical Director of the Hospital. After seeking written approval the questionnaires were administered by the researchers to the participants who expressed willingness to participate in the study after they have been informed of the content and purpose of the research. Information on how to fill the questionnaire was provided to ensure the participants give accurate information needed for the study. Also, the questionnaire was read out to respondents who could not read and write, or understand English and their responses were taken by the researchers.

Method of data analysis

Retrieved questionnaires were coded, and the researcher utilized descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, percentages, and standard deviation) to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents, their knowledge, attitudes and factors influencing their attitude towards childlessness. IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 was used to run the data analysis.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained from Research ethics review board of Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (IRB NO: BUHREC/352/19). Oral informed consent was sought from the participant and participation was entirely voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants’ responses were guaranteed as no individual coding or method of individual identification was used. There was no direct harm for those who chose to participate in the study. The study will be beneficial in the sense that, the results will inform policy and actions on childlessness.

Results

Socio-demographic data of respondents

A total of 218 respondents attending the healthcare facilities consented to participate in the study. Table 1 shows that more of the respondents 88(40%) were within age of 31 and 35years, more of respondents 92(42%) were Christians, 74(34%) were secondary school certificate holder, 128(59%) were self-employed while majority of the respondents 158(73%) were married. Also, majority of the respondents 148(68%) were Yoruba and a simple majority, 86 (39%) of the respondents had monthly income of 30,000-50,000 naira.

Table 1: Socio-demographic data of respondents Attitude of adult men toward childlessness

N=218		
Socio-demographic variable	Respondents	Frequency (%)
Age	25-30years	46(21.0)
	31-35years	88(40.0)
	36-40years	38(18.0)
	41-45years	46(21.0)
Religion	Christianity	92(42.0)
	Islam	87(40.0)
	Traditional	31(14.0)
	Others	8(4.0)
Level of Educational	Primary	66(30.0)
	Secondary	74(34.0)
	Tertiary	52(24.0)
	Non Formal	26(12.0)
Occupation	Civil servant	41(19.0)
	Self employed	128(59.0)
	Unemployed	40(18.0)
	Others	9(4.0)
Marital Status	Single	158(73.0)
	Married	22(10.0)
	Divorced	29(13.0)
	Widow	9(4.0)
Ethnicity	Yoruba	148(68.0)
	Igbo	38(17.0)
	Hausa	21(10.0)
	Others	11(5.0)
Income (in Naira)	10,000-30,000	28(13.0)
	30,000-50,000	86(39.0)
	50,000-100,000	74(34.0)
	100,000-200,000	30(14.0)

Table 2 present the attitude of respondents on childlessness. The mean attitude score was 16.5±3.5. Majority (74.0%) of the respondents had negative

attitude while 26.0% had positive attitude towards childlessness. Majority (36.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that whether children or no

children, they will be Okay, 33.0% also disagreed while only 17.0% of the respondents agreed. Close to half (48.0%) and 33.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that childlessness makes the home boring and makes men lonely. Another 61.0% strongly agreed that Childlessness in home can lead

men to extramarital affairs while 44.0% also reported that Childlessness in the home can make man to become violent, only 13.0% of the respondents reported men show more concern for their wife in childless situation.

**Table 2: Attitude of adult men toward childlessness
Level of respondent’s knowledge on childlessnes N=218**

VARIABLE	RESPONSES			
	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
My educational level gives me more knowledge on childlessness	72 (33.0)	52 (24.0)	48 (22.0)	46 (21.0)
Whether children or no children, I will be okay	31 (14.0)	38 (17.0)	71 (33.0)	78 (36.0)
Childlessness makes the home boring and makes men lonely	104 (48.0)	72 (33.0)	12 (5.0)	30 (14.0)
Men feel withdrawn from their wife in the home when childless	62 (28.0)	68 (31.0)	34 (16.0)	54 (25.0)
There is reduced love or affection toward the wife by the husband when childless	79 (36.0)	53 (24.0)	34 (16.0)	52 (24.0)
Childlessness in home lead men to extramarital affairs	132 (61.0)	44 (19.0)	32 (15.0)	10 (5.0)
Men shift all blame to the wife in childlessness situation	104 (48.0)	72 (33.0)	22 (10.0)	20 (9.0)
Childlessness brings more closeness between husband and wife	32 (15.0)	48 (22.0)	78 (36.0)	60 (36.0)
Men show more concern for their wife in childless situation	54 (25.0)	28 (13.0)	66 (30.0)	70 (32.0)
Childlessness in the home can cause divorce.	82 (38.0)	64 (29.0)	58 (27.0)	14 (6.0)
Men tend to bring into the home another woman when the initial wife is childless	58 (27.0)	63 (29.0)	41 (19.0)	56 (25.0)
Childlessness in the home can make man to become violent	96 (44.0)	68 (31.0)	41 (18.0)	13 (6.0)

The table 3 below shows the summary of the respondents’ knowledge on childlessness. This shows that more respondents (54.0%) had moderate

knowledge level about childlessness with mean knowledge score of 17.16 and standard deviation of 1.68.

Table 3: Respondents' knowledge level about childlessness

	Categories (%)				
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Low	Moderate	High
Respondents knowledge about childlessness	17.16	1.68	26.0	54.0	20.0

Factors influencing attitude toward childlessness

The factors identified include knowledge, influence of friends, family pressure, level of income, cultural belief and level of education.

Table 4: Factors that influence attitude toward childlessness

VARIABLE	Responses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Adequate knowledge about the cause of childlessness is a great factor that influence men attitude	126 (58.0)	92 (42.0)
Childless men are easily influenced by their friends	140 (64.0)	78 (36.0)
Pressure from the family can contribute to men attitude toward childlessness	132 (61.0)	86 (39.0)
Influential status of the man in question can be a factor to his response towards childlessness	101 (46.0)	117 (54.0)
Low income men might not be able to seek treatment modality	56 (26.0)	162 (74.0)
Men with good salary payment react positively to infertility treatment	118 (54.0)	100 (46.0)
Cultural belief of incompleteness in men without child/ children is a factor that affect men toward childlessness	92 (42.0)	126 (58.0)
Occupied position is a determinant for men's attitude toward childlessness	83 (38.0)	135 (62.0)
Level of education affect men response toward childlessness	121 (54.0)	97 (44.0)

Discussion

More of the respondents had moderate knowledge about childlessness. This can be supported by the fact that there is high access to information on childlessness on internet and other media. This finding agreed with previous descriptive study by Sylvest, Koert, Petersen, Malling, Hald, Andersen and Schmidt (2018) in which more of the respondents had moderate knowledge about childlessness. The Negative attitude about childlessness observed in this study could also be because of the feeling and belief that childlessness is always a problem from women. Most men do not see childlessness as a man's problem. This is in line with the study by Hammarberg, Collins, Holden, Young and McLachlan (2017) in which research participants had negative attitude about childlessness. The Implication of this is that good attitude is what can enhance the effort of health seeking behaviour by couples having problems with fertility. The efforts will thereby be joint efforts not blaming childlessness on a particular person. Also, the negative attitude as documented in this study can predispose women to single effort on seeking help on childlessness. Good attitude tends and is more likely to help prevent the negative effect of infertility on the family such as domestic violence and divorce.

References

- Ashraf, Ali & Azadeh, (2014). Effect of quality of life, A Cross sectional study. *Journal of clinical and diagnostic research*, 8(10):13-15. Doi: 10.7860/JCDR/201418481.5063
- HbisomiLatifat and Nudege NetseyiNoris, (2014). Childlessness in Nigeria: perception and acceptability. *Culture, health and sexuality*, 16(1) 61-75
- Hammarberg, Collins, Holden, Young and McLachlan (2017). Men's knowledge, attitude and behavior relating to fertility. *Human reproduction Update*, 23(4):458-480.
- Kumar, N., & Singh, A. K. (2015, October). Trends of male factor infertility, an important cause of infertility: A review of the literature. *Journal of Human Reproductive Sciences*, 8(4), 191-196.
- Nordqvist, C. (2018, January 4). "Infertility in men and women." *Medical News Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/165748.php>.
- Rasak B. & Oladipo P. (2018), childless and its socio-cultural implication on married couples within some selected Yoruba communities in south west Nigeria. *International journal of innovative social sciences and humanities research*, 5(1): 42-54 ISSN 2354-2926.
- Sylvest, R., Koert, E., Birch Petersen, K., Malling, G. M. H., Hald, F., Nyboe Andersen, A. N., & Schmidt, L. (2018), Attitudes towards family formation among men attending fertility counselling: *Reproductive Biomedicine & Society*. 6: 1-9.