How Informed are They? Coverage of Prostate Cancer Issues by Select Mainstream Newspapers in Nigeria

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Abstract
This paper focused on coverage of prostate cancer issues by select mainstream newspapers in Nigeria. The aims were to: Find out the frequency of coverage given to prostate cancer issues in Nigerian newspapers, determine the level of prominence given to prostate cancer issues in Nigerian newspapers and ascertain the story formats that are predominant in the coverage of prostate cancer issues in Nigerian newspapers. This study adopted content analysis method and two mainstream newspapers were selected in Nigeria; The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers. The period of study was six months (March 1st to August 31st, 2022). The findings revealed that the select newspapers did not report prostate cancer issues adequately and frequently in Nigerian newspapers. Further findings showed that 88% of the stories on prostate cancer were placed on the inside pages of the newspapers. Thus, the issue was not given prominence. Also, straight news format was predominantly used by the two newspapers in reporting prostate cancer in Nigeria. The study concludes that prostate cancer issues were not given adequate coverage and prominence during the period of study in Nigerian newspapers. Against this backdrop, the researchers recommended that Nigerian newspapers should report more news stories on prostate cancer in Nigeria using feature news format and in-depth interpretation. This will make the public to be informed and educated, thereby taking precautionary measures to curtail or prevent prostate cancer.
Keywords: Prostate, Cancer, issues, Mainstream, Newspapers, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The American Cancer Society defined the prostate as a gland found only in males that makes some of the fluid that is part of semen. The prostate is found below the bladder and in front of the rectum, it is about the size of a walnut and can be much larger in older men. Prostate cancer begins when cells in the prostate gland start to grow out of control. It was reported that about 1 in 9 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. Prostate cancer has become a global health challenge because of its rising morbidity and mortality rates in males. It was classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018 as one of the most common cancer with 1.28 million cases and a 26.6% incidence rate in Africa. Sadly, over 100,000 Nigerians are diagnosed with cancer annually (Faridah, 2019).

It has been discovered that Western Africa has the fifth-highest risk for prostate cancer mortality in the world and Nigeria has the largest population and economy in this region. How saddening! Prostate cancer for Nigerian men is both the most common and most deadly

cancer with 32.8 cases and 16.3 deaths per 100,000 men. This according to the study, is more than double the death rate in North America with an estimated 80% of Nigerians incurable on the diagnosis. Delongchamps, Sigh & Haas (2007) observe that prostate cancer has become the number one cancer in men with increasing incidence and morbidity in men of black Africa ancestry.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. The prostate is a walnut size gland that is part of the male reproductive system. It is located below the unitary bladder and in front of the rectum. It produces the fluid that makes up semen. The tube that carries urine from the bladder passes through the gland. Some significant symptoms are that due to the tube carrying urine from bladder passes through the prostate gland, urine flow is often affected by the gland getting bigger. Other symptoms to watch out for are needing to urinate frequently, particularly at night, poor urine stream and difficulty starting to pee (www.prostate-cancer.org.uk).

Nonetheless, prostate cancer is a menace that is silently raking havoc on Nigerian men. Owoseye (2019) observes that a study has revealed that most men in Nigeria do not have knowledge of prostate cancer and have not been screened of the disease. Studies done in Nigeria have shown that knowledge of prostate cancer was generally low (Ogundele & Ikuerowo, 2015).

The true burden of the disease is not known, but study shows that one in four Nigerian men faces the risk of developing prostate cancer (Owoseye, 2019). The increasing cases of prostate cancer in Nigeria call for proper and robust media reportage that will educate enlighten and offer preventive measures sensitive and interpretative reporting and help members of the society make sense of the issue. This is significant because the mass media are responsible for setting agenda on critical issues affecting the society. How the members of the pubic comprehend prostate cancer generally, mainly depends on how health issues and prostate are reported because the media are important in shaping how the public comprehends issues and how relevant agencies devise strategies to solve difficulties (O'Brien, 2020 as cited in Olu-Egbor et al, 2022).

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, a period to assist people learn about prostate cancer and support those who are affected. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men. In 2022, the American Cancer Society estimates there will be about 268,490 new cases and about 34,500 deaths from prostate cancer (https://www.urologyhealth.org). Media reports on various health issues can have demanding effects on the populace over time. Many health communication studies have investigated this domain and found that health information in newspapers affects the health behaviours of newspapers readers (Wakefield, Loken & Hornik, 2010). There have been some studies on prostate cancer from different disciplines; however, there is a dearth of literature on prostate cancer particularly on how Nigerian newspapers report the issue. To this end this study investigated the coverage of prostate cancer issues by select mainstream newspapers in Nigeria.

Research Questions
The following research questions were designed to guide the study:
1. What is the frequency of report given to prostate cancer issues in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What is the level of prominence given to prostate cancer issues in Nigerian newspapers?
3. Which of the story formats are predominant in the report of prostate cancer issues in Nigerian newspapers?

Empirical Studies

Enemugwem, Eze, Ejike, Eme, Asuquo & Tobin (2019) carried out a study titled "Prostate cancer screening: assessment of knowledge and willingness to screen among men in Obio Akpor LGA, Rivers State, Nigeria". Survey research method was adopted. Findings revealed that the most frequently reported source of information about prostate cancer screening was the news media with 72 items or 35.0% and healthcare workers with 62 items or 30.1%. Thirty (14.9%) of the respondents had good knowledge of prostate cancer, while 80 (39.6%) had good knowledge of prostate cancer screening methods. Concerning prostate cancer screening methods, only 47 (23.3%) was able to correctly identify screening methods for prostate cancer. The researchers recommended the need for the Rivers State Ministry of Health to carry out awareness campaigns on the importance of prostate screening.

Okoro & Anho (2015) examined newspapers coverage of health related millennium development goals in Nigeria. The researchers adopted content analysis research method. The researchers selected Vanguard and Punch newspapers published between July 2011 and June 2014. The findings revealed that the two newspapers did not give as much attention to the health goals as with the issues of politics and insurgency, which were constant and had prominent features within the period studied.

Aluh, Anyachebelu, Azubuike, & Abdulmuminu, (2018) carried out a study knowledge, attitudes, and perception of prostate cancer among male outpatients of a tertiary care hospital in south-east Nigeria. The researchers adopted survey research method. The study found that the out patients surveyed expressed an appreciable level of knowledge about prostate cancer. Although, quite a number had positive attitude toward the disease, majority possessed negative attitude, and perception about prostate cancer. The researchers recommended that there is need for wide-spread sensitization and educational programs on prostate cancer that will increase the acceptance of screening activities, early detection, and ultimately better management of disease state.

Atulomah, Olanrewaju, Amosu, & Adedeji (2010) investigated the level of awareness, perception and screening behavior regarding prostate cancer among men in a rural community of Ikenne Local Government Area, south-western Nigeria. The study used a cross-sectional design utilizing a pre-tested 36-item questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha of 0.62) to collect information about knowledge screening and screening behavior among men in a rural community in south-western Nigeria. The findings suggest that level of awareness about prostate cancer among men in this study was low while their level of perception was just above average and screening behavior was very low. The researchers recommended that there should be an aggressive health promotion intervention designed to increase awareness and to correct impressions about prostate cancer in the community.

The research gap is that not much have done in the area of media coverage of prostate cancer, particularly using content analysis method. Other few studies used survey research method. Thus, this study fulfills gaps observed in other revealed studies.

Theoretical Framework

This study used agenda setting theory. Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, (2017) observe that the theory can be traced to the first chapter of Walter Lippmann's 1992 book, public opinion. Lippmann opines that the mass are the principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public. However, following Lippmann in 1963, Bernard Cohen noted that the press may not be successful much of the time in telling its

readers what to think about. Therefore, in 1992, Walter Lippmann's book on public opinion set the stage for the theory of agenda setting by saying that the news media construct our view of the world (Wahal-Jogensen & Hanitzsch, 2009 cited in Olu-Egbor, Amah & Ezeji, 2022)

Agenda setting entails the ability of the mass media to influence the level of the public's awareness of issues as opposed to their knowledge about those issues. The assumption of the theory is that the media set agenda for the public to follow. Therefore, in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play important part in shaping public agenda. Readers learn not only about issue a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to the issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position (Anwumabelem & Asemah, 2021).

In relation to this study, it is assumed that the prominence the media give to prostate cancer issues through frequent reportage and adequate placement of stories can influence members of the public's view or opinion and reactions towards the disease. Also, it will increase their awareness and inform them about the precautionary measures to adopt to prevent prostate cancer.

RESEARCH METHOD

The analysed two Nigerian dailies (The Guardian, and Vanguard newspapers). The newspapers were considered based on defined criteria such as wide coverage, rank, ownership structure and distribution across the country (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, 2022). The population covers the editions of the select newspapers published from 1st March 2022 to 31st August, 2022 (6 months). This period was considered important in view of the fact that September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, a period to assist people learn about prostate cancer and support those who are affected. It is assumed before the month of September, newspapers in Nigeria are expected to start creating awareness and sensitising members of the society on the issue. The total population of study is 368 (i.e. 184 x 2 = 368) weekend editions inclusive.

Sample Size Determination and Sampling Technique

The researchers adopted Nwanna's (1998) as cited in Chime-Nganya, Ezeji, & Ezegwu, (2017), stipulation of 40% for few hundreds in sample size determination (percentage formula).

$$n = \frac{NV}{100} \quad n = \frac{368 \times 40}{100} \quad n = 147$$

Thus, since the population was small and manageable, the census sampling method was adopted to allow the researchers study all the population elements with major focus on the following **units of analysis;** Straight news, features, editorials, opinion/column, interview and photographs. The instrument used in collecting the data was code sheet. Data were generated from the select newspapers through a detailed page by page review of the newspapers and coded on the prepared code sheet. This ensured easy, fast and accurate collection of data necessary for the study.

Content Categories

Under the units of analysis, the following were used for the content categories: Frequency of coverage, Prominence and story formats are:

1. Frequency of Coverage: This refers to total number of reports based on individual newspapers on prostate cancer issues in Nigeria.
2. Prominence: This refers to where stories related to prostate cancer is placed, using front page lead, front page, inside page and back page.
3. Story Format: This refers to pattern of prostate cancer reportage, which could be in form of: Straight news, features, editorials, opinions/columns, interview and photographs.

The inter-coder reliability for the study was calculated using Holstics formula as shown below:

Reliability = 2M

$N_1 + N_2$

Where M = number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree

N_1 = number of coding decisions by the first coder

N_2 = number of coding decisions by the second coder

Hence, inter-coder reliability = $\frac{2(22) = 44 = 0.69}{32 \quad 64}$

The inter-coder reliability = 0.69

Applying Holsti's formular, this measurement had a high value, it means that coding process for the study to an extent was reliable.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The studied newspapers published a total of 51 stories within the study period. The Guardian newspaper published a total of 27 stories and Vanguard newspaper published 24 stories.

Table 1: Frequency of Coverage of Prostate Cancer Issues in by Select Mainstream Newspapers

Months	The Guardian	Vanguard	Total	Percentage
March	6	5	11	22
April	3	4	7	13
May	5	5	10	20
June	4	3	7	13
July	6	5	11	22
August	3	2	5	10
Total	27	24	51	100

The data in table 1 showed the frequency of coverage given to prostate cancer issues within the period of the study. The Guardian newspaper has the higher number of coverage compared to Vanguard newspaper. The issue was mainly reported in the month of March and July, 2022 which recorded 22% each. Prostate cancer issues were not reported frequently.

Table 2: Level of Prominence Given to Coverage of Prostate Cancer Issues

Story formats	The Guardian	Vanguard	Total	Percentage
Front page lead	0	0	0	0
Front page	1	2	3	6
Inside page	24	21	45	88
Back page	2	1	3	6
Total	27	24	51	100

The data in table two revealed that majority (88%) of the stories on prostate cancer by select mainstream newspapers were placed on the inside pages of the newspapers. The implication is that, the issue of prostate cancer was not given prominence.

Table 3: Predominant Story Formats Used by the Studied Newspapers in the Coverage

Story formats	The Guardian	Vanguard	Total	Percentage
Straight news	16	14	30	59
Feature	2	3	5	10
Editorial	0	0	0	0
Opinions/Column	4	3	7	14
Interview	2	2	4	7
Photographs	3	2	5	10
Total	27	24	51	100

The implication of data in table 3 revealed that the report of prostate cancer issues was dominated by straight news stories, with over 59%.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined how mainstream newspapers in Nigeria covered the issue of prostate cancer from March to August 2022. The aim was to find out how effective the media helped in creating awareness about prostate cancer issues among Nigerians. It is opine that the seriousness that people attach to disease depends on the agenda set by the media. From the analysed data, it was discovered that prostate cancer issues were not reported adequately and frequently in Nigerian newspapers. The studied newspapers reported 51 issues within the period of the study. With such low frequency, it becomes difficult for the members of the society to know the dangers of prostate cancer. This finding disagrees with the assumption of the agenda setting theory that more attention the media give to an issue, the more likely the public will consider that issue to be significant or important. Here, the issue of prostate cancer was not given much attention. Comparatively, The Guardian (27) newspaper has the highest number of coverage compared to Vanguard (24) newspaper.

However, prominence in this study entails the placement or the position of the stories in the select newspapers. Most times, newspapers use prominence to show the importance attached to stories, therefore, the more a news story appears in front page of a particular newspaper, the priority it has over others. In grading news stories, less attention is given to stories that are placed on the inside pages, while more attention is given to stories that appeared in front pages of newspapers. The data in table two revealed that majority (88%) of the stories on prostate cancer were placed on the inside pages of the newspapers. The implication is that, the issue of prostate cancer was not given prominence.

This finding did not support the agenda setting theory as used in the work. According to Nwabueze, Obiora & Ezeoke (2006 as cited in Ezegwu, Obichili, Linus & Omokhapue, 2021), as the media emphasis issues, members of the society attach importance to those issues that have been given prominence. Also, according to agenda setting theory, people not only learn about public issues and other topics from the media, but they also learn how much significance to attach to an issue or subject based on how much focus the media places on it (Iheanacho, Jumbo & Etumnu, 2021).

More so, it was discovered that various news formats were used in prostate cancer coverage within the period studied. Thus, straight news was predominantly used by all two newspapers. more importantly, the newspapers did perfectively well in using different news formats in telling the story about prostate cancer, their dominant use of straight news only

shows that they did not do much in-depth investigative and interpretative reporting about the prostate cancer to educate and enlighten the populace. It would be recalled that prostate cancer was classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018 as one of the most common cancer with 1.28 million cases and a 26.6% incidence rate in Africa. Sadly, over 100,000 Nigerians are diagnosed with cancer annually **(**Faridah, 2019). This is the reason other news formats should have adopted in reportage of the issue in other to create more awareness on its danger.

Editorial article recorded zero stories and this means that no attention was paid to editorials published during the period of study. It is regrettable that editorials, being the newspapers' views on topical issues, have not effectively presented their stands on prostate cancer. According to a 2019 Lancet article, Nigeria has the fifth highest risk for prostate cancer also the most common and deadly in Nigeria men. Nwabueze (2017) opines that by exposing certain topical issues for public debate and discussion, the editorial sets the agenda for the public. The good and bad ideas, harsh and people-oriented policies and other current issues are brought-up for discussion on the editorial page as matters for general debate in the society.

CONCLUSION

The media are important channels through which information about various issues, particularly health matters get to the public. Thus, this study has provided evidence into how the select mainstream newspapers covered prostate cancer stories from March 1st to August 31st 2022. From the study, it is obvious that the select newspapers did not report prostate cancer issues adequately and frequently in Nigerian newspapers and straight news was predominantly used by all two newspapers in reporting prostate cancer in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that:
1. Nigerian newspapers should report more news stories on prostate cancer in Nigeria using feature news format and in-depth interpretation. This will make the public to be informed and educated, thereby taking precautionary measures to curtail or prevent prostate cancer.
2. More prominence should be given to stories on prostate cancer, especially by placing such stories on the front and back cover of the newspapers.
3. Newspapers in Nigeria should go beyond straight news formats as revealed in this study. More emphasis should be given to other news formats such as opinion/column, features, interview frim heart experts, editorial and the use of pictures/photographs. Prostate cancer is health threatening, using pictures/photographs to display such disease will create more awareness among the populace.

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