



## **Undergraduates' Utilization of University's Health Care Services in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria.**

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### **Abstract**

In spite of the effort of government and school management to provide School health services that will meet the health needs of students, undergraduates students would rather opt for unlicensed medical vendors, self-medicate, use traditional herbal medicine - a very common practice in Nigeria than utilize school health care centres that offer free or subsidized services.

This study employed descriptive survey research method, using quantitative interview to select 587 undergraduates who represents 5% of all the university's faculties at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State. Descriptive statistics of mean and percentage was used to treat data collected

The result revealed that the hostility of medical staff towards students discourages students' utilization of school medical services. Students' preference to self-medication is because it saves time as against the long-time demanding processes of accessing school health services. Believe in efficacy of traditional medicine and non-availability of needed drugs push students away and results to poor utilization of school health centres.

School health promotion and services is important for an excellent teaching and learning session in the university settings. Hence, schools should foster healthy learning environment. School health centres should be youth friendly, unnecessary bureaucratic processes that causes delay in accessing required health services must be managed to ensure efficiency. Further study will focus on the impact of health workers relationship on undergraduates' utilization of school health services.



**Key words:** Undergraduates, Utilization, University Health Centre, Health services.

## **Introduction**

Undergraduates are tertiary institution students seeking to obtain a Bachelorette Degree. This level of education is attained after the completion of secondary education. According to the National University Commission, as at 2018, there were about 1.9 million students in Nigerian universities. The male students accounted for 59.3% while the female students made up the remaining 40.7% (Amoo, 2018)

The Nigerian Government has recognized the need to respond to the health needs of university students by providing the National School Health Policy document which was designed to put in place a national framework for the formulation, coordination, implementation and effective monitoring and evaluation of school health programs (SHP). The NSHP states that the aim of SHP is to promote the health of learners to achieve 'Education For All' (EFA) (National School Health Policy, 2006)

The World Health Organization (WHO), (2012) defined a health promoting school as one that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. WHO expert committee on comprehensive school health education and promotions notes that "to learn effectively students need good health". Good health supports successful learning and successful learning supports good health. School health services is an essential component of effective school health program, it ensures that students are healthy and able to learn at all times. It is an essential component for achieving "Education for All" (EFA) inclusive of students with special needs.

The major health challenges of this population, which is made worse by inadequate access to health care includes, but are not limited to; alcoholism, depression, unintended pregnancy, disordered eating, sexual assault and sexually transmitted infections (STI's) (American College Health Association, (2008)

In most developed countries like the United State of America (USA) young people between the ages of 15- 24 years represent 48% of STDs patients have access to comprehensive healthcare in their respective health institutions (Weinstoc, Berman and Cates, 2014). According to the National institute on alcohol abuse and alcoholism, about 4 in 5 college undergraduates' students drink alcohol. Nearly 600,000 undergraduate college students are injured while under the influence of alcohol each year. From a Nigerian study Oshikoya and Alli (2006) reveals that the awareness, knowledge, practices and attitudes of Nigerian Undergraduates towards drug



abuse is very poor which was about 41%. A major morbidity among university students is insomnia while the National College Health Assessment from spring of 2012 observed that 25% of undergraduates have sleep difficulties, and half of all students reported having trouble with sleepiness during a given day (NCHA, 2012). A survey carried out in 2012 by National College Health Association observed that 18.3% of the Georgetown University identified sleep difficulties as a factor that negatively affected their academic performance. Also, the National College Health Assessment, a survey taken every year by Georgetown students, shows that internet and gaming use is among the top (10) ten things that negatively affect academic performance (NCHA, 2012)

A study done by researchers at the institute of psychological sciences in Leeds, U.K theorized that undergraduates that are addicted to internet, use the platform as a replacement for real life socializing which result in depression.

Furthermore, sexual assault has been classified as problematic with regards to public health and public safety with serious implications for socialization within the student community. Data collected by Right to Information International using a web-based survey from over 6,800 undergraduate students made up of 5,466 women and 1,375 men indicates that 13.7% of undergraduate women had been victims of at least one completed sexual assault since entering university 4.7% were victims of physically forced sexual assault, 7.8% of women were sexually assaulted when they were incapacitated after voluntarily consuming drugs and/or alcohol (i.e. they were victims of alcohol and/or other drug (AOD) enabled sexual assault).0.6% were sexually assaulted when they were incapacitated after having been given a drug without their knowledge (i.e. they were certain they had been victims of drug facilitated sexual assault (DFSA).

In Africa, health issues such as malaria, typhoid and stomach pains which are prevalent to the environment were also reported as a major health challenge of students. (Hussain, Guppy, Robertson, and Temple, 2013) Malaria for instance accounts for over 300 million cases of students' fatality, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for the majority of these death (Federal Ministry of Health 2008). In the same vein, a study on the incidence of malaria among undergraduates in the University of Benin, Edo-State, Nigeria shows that the incidence of malaria in the University accounts for 75% of clinic attendance among students (Adeyemo, Makinde, Chulewuka, & Oyana, 2006)



However, university students identified some obstacles that affect their utilization of health care centre services; these are the cost, waiting time, insufficient health information, unfriendly attitude of health care employees and medication shortages (Ogundele, Abdulkarim & Enyinnaya, 2014)

Consequently, Obiechina, (2013), observed that Olabisi Onabanjo University just like many other major universities in Nigeria have extensive health infrastructures for the provision of effective and efficient health services to the students. The institution has (7) seven health centers located in her various campuses. These health centers are situated in strategic places where students can easily have access to them but the utilization rate of this services are far below average. Hence there is need to study the utilization and the predicting factors. This study is expected to provide school administrators and policy makers with findings that will help in reviewing School Health Programs for better service provisions.

### **Research design**

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study.

### **Research Objectives**

### **Sampling techniques**

Simple random technique was used to select 5% of undergraduates in each of five faculties of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun state.

### **Instrument**

The questionnaire, which was based on the literature review, covered 18 questions items in five parts;

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data obtained from the administered questionnaires as and analyzed using tables, simple percentages, and chart.

## **RESULTS**

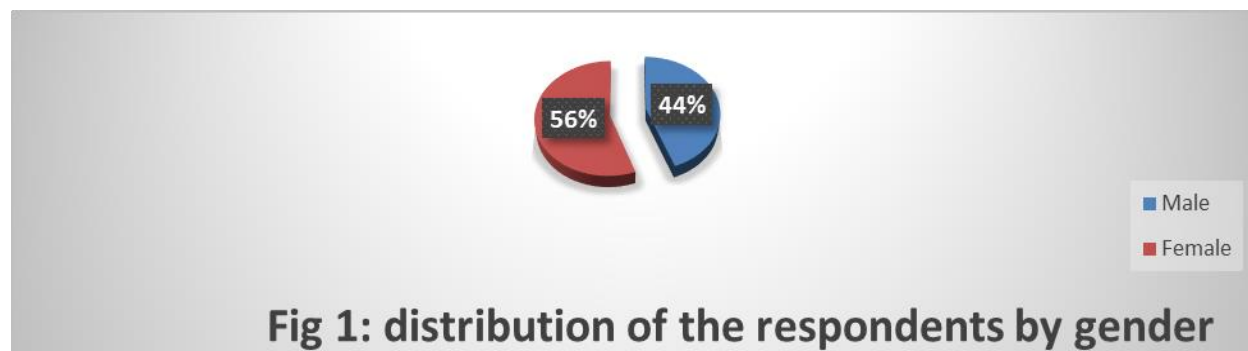
Data was collected and the descriptive statistics of mean (X) and percentage was used for demographic data and to analyse data collected.

### Characteristics of students

**Table 1:** *Distribution of the respondents by gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	251	44.4
Female	314	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that Of the 565 respondents, 251(44.4%) of the respondents were males and 314(55.6%) were females.



**Table 2:** *Distribution of the respondents by faculty*

Faculty	Population	Percentage (5%)
Arts	1,307	65
Education	2,217	111
Law	616	31
Science	3,346	167
Social Management Science	4,268	213
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,754</b>	<b>587</b>

The students were recruited from five academic Faculties. 5% of the total numbers of students in each of the faculty were recruited for the study.

**Table 3:** *Perception of the respondents on health personnel in University health centre*

s/n	Health personnel	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$
1	The health personnel in the school health centres are adequate for the delivery of health services	25 4.4%	97 17.2%	234 41.4%	209 37.0%	3.11
2	Adequate health personnel in Olabisi Onabanjo University health centres motivates me to utilize the available health care services.	52 9.2%	94 16.6%	308 54.4%	111 19.6%	2.85
3	Health personnel in the health centre are friendly to their patient	89 15.8%	160 28.3%	235 41.6%	81 14.3%	2.55
4	Health personnel are not always on ground for their duties	155 27.4%	208 36.8%	146 25.8%	56 9.9%	2.18
<b>Weighted mean = 2.67</b>						

**Key: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree**

Table 3 shows the perception of the respondents on health personnel in the *University health centre*. It shows that “The health personnel in the school health centres are adequate for the delivery of health services” ( $\bar{x} = 3.11$ ) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by, “Adequate health personnel in the University health centres motivates a student to utilize the available health care services” ( $\bar{x} = 2.85$ ), “Health personnel in the health centre are friendly to their patient” ( $\bar{x} = 2.55$ ) and lastly “Health personnel are not always on ground for their duties” ( $\bar{x} = 2.18$ ) respectively.

**Table 4:** *Perception of the respondents on drug supply in University health centre, Ogun state*

s/n	Drug supply	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$
1	Inability to get appropriate drugs from the school health centres makes the students to patronize other available health care facilities.	42 7.4%	86 15.2%	158 28.0%	279 49.4%	3.19
2	Adequacy in the supply of drugs encourages utilization of health services by the students	35 6.2%	97 17.2%	175 31.0%	258 45.7%	3.16
3	Drugs are dispensed at affordable prices at the school health centres	36 6.4%	77 13.6%	270 47.8%	182 32.2%	3.06
4	Availability of vaccines for immunization of diseases makes students to utilize the health services	42 7.4%	192 34.0%	141 25.0%	190 33.6%	2.85
<b>Weighted mean = 3.07</b>						

**Key:**  
**SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree**

Table 4 shows the perception of the respondents on drug supply in University health centre. It shows that “Inability to get appropriate drugs from the school health centre makes the students patronize other available health care facilities” ( $\bar{x} = 3.19$ ) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by “Adequacy in the supply of drugs encourages utilization of health services by the students” ( $\bar{x} = 3.16$ ), “Drugs are dispensed at affordable prices at the school health centres” ( $\bar{x} = 3.06$ ) and lastly “Availability of vaccines for immunization of diseases makes students to utilize the health services” ( $\bar{x} = 2.85$ ) respectively.

**Table 5:** *Perception of the respondents on self-medication in Olabisi Onabanjo University health centre Ogun state.*

s/n	Self-medication	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$
1	Self-medication is time saving hence I don't waste my time by going to school health centre.	178 31.5%	141 25.0%	105 18.6%	141 25.0%	2.37
2	I prefer self-medication than going to school health centres	205 36.3%	107 18.9%	104 18.4%	149 26.4%	2.35
<b>Weighted mean = 2.36</b>						

**Key:** SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 5 shows the perception of the respondents on self-medication in Olabisi Onabanjo University Ogun state. It shows that “Self-medication is time saving hence I don't waste my time by going to school health centre” ( $\bar{x} = 2.37$ ) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed by “I prefer self-medication than going to school health centres” ( $\bar{x} = 2.35$ ).

**Table 6:** *Believe of student in Olabisi Onabanjo University Ogun state on traditional medicine (Agbo)*

s/n	Traditional medicine	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$
1	Traditional medicine is detrimental to your health because it does not have specific prescription.	125 22.3%	90 15.9%	102 18.1%	247 43.7%	2.83
2	Traditional medicine is more economical than the drugs at the school health care service centres.	70 12.4%	227 40.2%	154 29.0%	104 18.4%	2.48
3	Traditional medicine is more accessible than the drugs at the school health care centres	83 14.7%	240 42.5%	148 26.2%	94 16.6%	2.47
4	I prefer traditional medicine because it is most efficient in curing aliment.	130 23.0%	130 23.0%	112 19.8%	193 34.2%	1.95
<b>Weighted mean = 2.43</b>						

**Key:**  
SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 6 shows that believe of students in Olabisi Onabanjo University, on traditional medicine. It shows that “Traditional medicine is detrimental to your health because it does not have specific prescription” ( $\bar{x} = 2.83$ ) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by the mean score rating “Traditional medicine is more economical than the drugs at the school health care service centres” ( $\bar{x} = 2.48$ ), “Traditional medicine is more accessible than the drugs at the school health care centres” ( $\bar{x} = 2.47$ ) and “I prefer traditional medicine because it is most efficient in curing ailment” ( $\bar{x} = 1.95$ ) respectively.

**Table 7:** *Effect of off campus residency on utilization of health services in Olabisi Onabanjo University Ogun state towards health care*

s/n	Off campus residency	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$
1	It is difficult for me to get to school health centre in times of emergencies	41 7.3%	79 14.0%	216 38.2%	229 40.5%	3.12
2	The distance from the house to the health care centres discourages me to utilize the school health care services	50 8.8%	123 21.8%	203 35.9%	189 33.5%	2.94
3	Off campus residency is not a barrier for me in utilizing the health care services being provided in Olabisi Onabanjo University health centre.	154 27.3%	109 19.3%	178 31.5%	124 21.9%	2.48
<b>Weighted mean = 2.85</b>						

**Key:SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree**

Table 7 shows the effect of staying off campus on utilization of health services in Olabisi Onabanjo University Ogun state towards health care. It shows that “It is difficult for me to get to school health centre in times of emergencies” ( $\bar{x} = 3.12$ ) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by “The distance from your house to the health care centres discourages me to utilize the school health care services” ( $\bar{x} = 2.94$ ) and “Off campus residency is not a barrier for me in utilizing the health care services being provided in Olabisi Onabanjo University Health Centre” ( $\bar{x} = 2.48$ ) respectively.

## Discussion

School health service is an essential component of effective school health program. Analysed result reveals that females dominated the study.

Inference drawn from the result in table 3 shows that majority of the respondent in the study agreed that the health personnel in the school health centres are adequate for the delivery of health services but that there were not always on ground to carry out their duties. This is consistent with the opinion of Ogundele, Abdulkarim, and Enyinnaya, (2014) that in Nigeria, university student face series of stress to access health care, the administration process and the





lackadaisical behaviour of some staff to students' ill-health have substantial influence on their decision to seek health care at the university health centre .

The current study found that the inability to get appropriate drugs from their school health centre make student patronize other available health care facilities and also, the provision and supply of required drugs will encourages them to utilize health services in their school. In this study, unavailability of medications is the most significant obstacle that discourages undergraduates from utilizing the University Health Center. This is similar to those found in a previous study by Abdullah (2017).

Inference drawn from the result reveals that majority of the respondents in the study indicated that self-medication is time saving hence they do not waste their time in going to the school health centre. This limitation work against the essence of going to the university health centre by some students. This indeed is one of the reasons why students prefer self-medicating at home when they become sick. This is in line with past studies; such barrier may hinder the utilization of health centres by students and cause them to use self-medication (Afolabi, Daropale, Irinoye , & Adegoke, 2013)

Majority of the respondents in the study believed that traditional medicine is detrimental to their health because it does not have specific prescription, traditional medicine is more economical than the drugs at their school health care service centres and traditional medicine is more accessible than the drugs at their school health care centre. This indicates poor access and availability of modern medicine in the university health centre. The study in agreement with a previous study of Ayers & Kronenfeld, (2012); Afolabi & Erhun (2003) that long duration of waiting is a main cause of patient discontent, and it may have an effect on health care services utilization; it encourages patients to use complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) Alkhawaldeh (2017). Safe alternative or traditional medicine should be incorporated in treatment plan to argument modern medications.

Inference drawn from the result in table 7 shows that majority of the students in the study indicate that it is difficult for them to get to school health centre in times of emergencies and the distance from their houses to the health care centres discourages them to utilize the school health care services.



Off campus accommodation means living independent of the University campus. This creates a barrier in the distance between where students lives and the health centre especially in emergence situation.

### **Limitations**

A number of limitations were encountered during the course of this study. The study was hospital based and conducted only in the university community where the sample population was sourced from. This in effect affected the sample size, thus, the findings of this study may not be generalized to health centre services in other private universities.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The findings from the study will help school administrators and School Health Policy makers to understand the complex and dynamic factors that influences undergraduates' utilization of university Health Centres so as to review programs and services to addresses barriers. The findings from this study will also promote positive health seeking behaviour of students

Finally, Chitalu, F. M. (2009) revealed that the poor funding of most universities in African has affected the type of health facilities available. Therefore, government and university administration should devote more budgets on university health care services to make medication and other essentials available.

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