

**SCIENCE-BASED HEALTHCARE TREATMENT SEEKING
BEHAVIOUR AGAINST CATARRH INFECTION AMONG
STUDENTS IN AMINU SALEH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, AZARE,
BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Healthcare-seeking behaviour is any action undertaken by individuals who perceive to have a health problem or to be ill to find an appropriate remedy. The study was designed to examine healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour against catarrh infection among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State. A descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study was all the students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare with a total of 7,531. The sample was 387 students from both schools of undergraduate and NCE sections of the college. The sample was selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while inferential statistics of one sample t-test was used to test the postulated hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result of the tested hypothesis revealed that there is a significant practice of science-based healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour against catarrh among students. It was concluded that students practice science-based healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour for the management of catarrh with some limitations regarding laboratory diagnosis and immediate response to infection situations.

Therefore, it was recommended that students should be encouraged to go for a sputum test before treatment of catarrh as this will help in determining the actual problem instead of relying on blind treatment. In addition, students should be sensitised to report to health facilities for immediate diagnosis and treatment of catarrh whenever they had any symptoms of the condition.

Keywords: Science-based, Healthcare, Treatment-Seeking Behaviour, Catarrh

Introduction

Healthcare-seeking behaviour as a concept has gained popularity in recent years as an important vehicle for exploring and understanding patient delay or prompt action across a variety of health conditions (Comally & McCarthy, 2011). It has also been defined as any action undertaken by individuals who perceive to have a health problem or to be ill to find an appropriate remedy (AJOL, 2021). The term is used interchangeably with treatment-seeking, and help-seeking and is described as part of both illness behaviour and health behaviour. Science-based treatment-seeking behaviour as defined by Sam (2022) is the active seeking of scientifically proof remediation from an appropriate health facility by an individual who is cognitively or physically ill, unstable or disturbed. Treatment-seeking behaviour was shown to be a complex decision-making process instigated by a problem that challenges personal abilities. The process is characterized by problem-focus, intentional action and interpersonal interaction (Comally & McCarthy, 2011). Healthcare-seeking behaviour is a particular aspect of help-seeking or scientifically based treatment-seeking behaviour, it is clear that people differ in their willingness to seek help from healthcare services. Some go readily for treatment, others only when in great pain and an advanced state of ill health (Psychology Wiki, 2022), it is preceded by a decision-making process that is further governed by individuals and/or household behaviour, community norms, and expectations as well as provider-related characteristics and behaviour (Ihaji, Gerald, & Ogwuche, 2014).

Women took more healthcare actions than men, but choose less qualified providers than men and reported lower health expenditure per visit. Similarly, the delay for seeking hospital treatment was longer for women than men (Mutawamba et al., 2019) where it was shown that delay before seeking hospital treatment was longer for women $P=0.04$. The study further revealed that more men reported giving sputum at a hospital than women. For this reason, the nature of care-seeking is not homogenous depending on cognitive and non-cognitive factors that call for a contextual analysis of care-seeking behaviour. Context may be a factor of cognition or awareness, socio-cultural as well as economic factors (Kakkar, Kandpal, Negi, & Kumar, 2013). Regarding healthcare-seeking

behaviour on various health issues, El Kahi, Abi Rizk, Hlais, and Adib (2012) pointed out that healthcare-seeking behaviour was categorized as formal (professional help sought); informal relational (help sought from friends/family); informal personal (self-help). In the study, the health issues examined were physical, psychological, social and relational, sexual, drug, alcohol and smoking. The finding shows that when facing health-related issues, the students tended to seek informal health care. Formal healthcare-seeking behaviour was almost non-existent for psychological issues (3.3%), relational and social issues (1.8%), and issues related to substance use (5.1%). The barriers to seeking formal healthcare fell into either accessibility or relational.

Catarrh is a condition that occurs when mucus builds up in one of the body's cavities or airways. In most cases, it affects the sinuses, throat, or back of the nose. Oftentimes the condition is temporary, but some individuals have experienced chronic catarrh, where their symptoms persist for months or even years. Catarrh can cause a variety of symptoms throughout the face and throat. Patients may feel like their throat needs constant clearing or is blocked. Their nose may feel permanently stuffed. Patients may also have a headache, persistent cough, runny sinuses, and experience temporary hearing loss. Catarrh can be treated either using saline nasal rinse bought in pharmaceutical shops or made locally at home, decongestants or through consulting a medical Doctor for diagnosis and treatment which is more appropriate (PrepHealth, 2020).

A study was conducted among 221 residential university students, and around 98% of the students had suffered from at least one illness like fever-all types (86.43%), common cold (52.94%), diarrhoea (20.36%), cough (46.61%), nasal congestion (10.86%), pain/aches-all types (25.79%), gastric problems (49.32%), skin diseases (15.38%), dental diseases (1.36%), eye diseases (0.9%), and many other diseases (4.52%). To mitigate these illnesses, a majority took medications instead, of self-recovery which was highest for dental and eye diseases (100%), and lowest for cough (58.25%) and nasal congestion (58.33%). Usually, 61.99% of the residents go to Government Hospitals for seeking treatment followed by University Medical Centres (41.63%), Private Medical consultants (5.88%), Private hospitals (4.52%), and others (3.62%). Moreover, 67.42% of the students take prescribed medicines as stated in the prescriptions. The study further revealed that there is a tendency among 83.26% of the students to take medicines without prescriptions (Udin, Islam, Kabir, & Al Mamun, 2020). Furthermore, Mutawamba et al. (2019) reported that 75.4% of the respondents previously seek care for chronic cough with 59.6% sought care from a public health facility, followed by private health facilities with 21.4%, while 13.5% visited drug store for chronic cough. Therefore, this study examined the science-based healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour against catarrh infection among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State.

Methodology

A descriptive research design of survey type was adopted in carrying out the study. The population of the study was all the students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare with a total of 7531 (College Students Affairs Division, 2022). The sample of the study was 387 students from both schools of undergraduate and NCE sections of the College. The sample was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure of purposive sampling, simple random sampling, proportionate sampling, and systematic sampling techniques. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the only school of undergraduate studies in the College, simple random sampling technique was used to select schools in the NCE section; it was also used to select Departments in the schools selected to give all schools the equal opportunity of participating in the research, proportionate sampling technique was used to an assigned number of respondents selected for each Department in proportion to the number of students in each Department has, while convenient sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. In this regard, the researchers administered the instrument to those available in the department during the period of data collection using research question “will students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare practice science-based healthcare-seeking behaviour in the management of catarrh?” and the postulated hypothesis “there is no significant science-based health care-seeking behaviour among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare.

The research instrument used for this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire on healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour on a four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD), and was scored as follows: Strongly Agreed 4, Agreed 3, Disagreed 2 and strongly Disagreed 1. The instrument was given face and content validity by three experts in the field of health education, and their corrections and observations were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. A pilot study was conducted using a split-half method to ascertain the reliability of the instrument in Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education, Kangyere which is not part of the study area. The result obtained was subjected to Cronbach alpha for reliability test; a coefficient of .72 was obtained which indicates that the instrument is reliable enough for data collection. The questionnaires retrieved were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the research question while inferential statistics of one sample t-test, were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level.

Result

The result of the study was based on the data collected from 387 both undergraduates and NCE students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State. The result was presented as follows:

Research question: Do students practise science-based healthcare treatment- seeking behaviour against catarrh in Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State?

Table 1: Frequency counts, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation on the Responses of Students on Science-based HealthCare-Seeking Behaviour against Catarrh in Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State

S/N	Question Items	SA	A	D	SD	Standard Deviation	Mean	Decision Mean 2.50
1.	Response to catarrh by reporting immediately to hospitals for treatment	159 (41.1%)	30 (7.8%)	17 (4.4%)	181 (46.8%)	1.41690	2.4315	Below
2.	Strict adherence to medical prescription in the treatment of Catarrh	214 (55.3%)	69 (17.8%)	10 (2.6%)	94 (24.3%)	1.24607	3.0413	Above
3.	Inhale menthol for the management of catarrh	227 (58.7%)	43 (11.1%)	77 (19.9%)	40 (10.3%)	1.08133	3.1809	Above
4.	Use only prescribed drugs	97 (25.1%)	29 (7.5%)	113 (29.2%)	148 (38.2%)	1.19418	2.1938	Below
5.	Follow up to ensure effective treatment of catarrh	172 (44.4%)	47 (12.1%)	60 (15.5%)	108 (27.9%)	1.28367	2.7313	Above
6.	Laboratory diagnosis before treatment of catarrh infection	61 (15.8%)	46 (11.9%)	94 (24.3%)	186 (48.1%)	1.10950	1.9535	Below
7.	Follow medical advice for the prevention of catarrh.	163 (42.1%)	56 (14.5%)	53 (13.7%)	115 (29.7%)	1.28643	2.6899	Above

Table 1 revealed the frequency counts, percentage, standard deviation and mean for the responses of students on the healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour in the treatment of catarrh among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State. The table shows that the students respond by reporting to the

hospital for treatment, use of only prescriptive drugs, and laboratory diagnosis before the treatment of catarrh were all below the set mean of 2.50, while Strict adherence to medical prescription in the treatment of Catarrh, Inhale menthol for the management of catarrh, follow up to ensure effective treatment of catarrh and observe medical advice for the prevention of catarrh all were above the set mean of 2.50.

Hypothesis: There is no significant science-based healthcare treatment- seeking behaviour against catarrh infection among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare

Table 2: Result of the Analysis of One-sample t-test on the Science-based HealthCare Seeking Behaviour against Catarrh Infection among Students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	df	t-cal	Sig.	Dec.
Seeking Behaviour	387	18.2222	5.23957	.26634	386	23.362	.000	HO Rejected
Test Mean		12						

Table portrayed the result of the analysis of a one-sample t-test on the response of the students on science-based healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour against catarrh among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State. The table shows that the calculated mean was 18.222 higher than the test mean of 12. The table also shows that the calculated t-cal was 23.362 with a calculated p-value of .000, this shows that the calculated p-value was less than the alpha value of .05 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is significant science-based healthcare-seeking behaviour against catarrh among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare.

Discussion

The result of the tested hypothesis revealed that there was a significant science- based healthcare treatment-seeking behaviour against catarrh infection among students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare. The finding was similar to the study of Udin, et al., (2020) who reported that student practice science-based healthcare-seeking behaviour on various healthcare services including catarrh. The finding further revealed that most of the students prefer to go for treatment- seeking in government-owned health facilities than opt for alternative medicine. The finding was also supported by the finding of the study of Senkoro, (2021) where it was reported that out of the total of 3,388 respondents with presumptive TB 31% sought treatment for symptoms, the finding further revealed that 41% of

the respondents sought care at the sites with TB diagnostic capacity where sputum examination and chest X-ray was performed. The finding was further supported by the finding of the study of Mutawamba, et al., (2019) where it was reported that a total of 1352 75.4% of the respondents had previously sought care for chronic cough with 805 (59.6) seeking care from public health facilities followed by private health facilities. However, up to 182 13.5% of the patients visited a drug store for chronic cough. Similarly, the finding of the study of Afolabi et al (2013) revealed that 37.5 of the respondents consulted their peers in health-related issues rather than seek treatment from a University health centre, 24.7% preferred community pharmacies while others took personal responsibility for their health or abstained from medical care for religious reasons. However, the finding of this study contradicts the finding of the study of Ajaegbu and Ubochi (2016) who revealed that for the management of common illnesses among students, they generally go to buy drugs from patent medicine stores when sick, they normally seek formal health care when they experience pains that they cannot accommodate. Similarly, the finding further contradicts the finding of the study of Gebreegziabher, Girma and Tesfaye (2022) revealed that 83.8% of the respondents sought treatment help from informal sources. However, the finding was supported by the finding of the study of Manuwarna and Waidyasekara (2014) who revealed that the majority (over 63%) of the respondents had used western medicine for the treatment of their health condition while the second largest group of the respondents use self-medication. The finding of this study was not surprising because there were active and free health care services to all students in the College.

Based on the finding of the study it was concluded that the students of Aminu Saleh College of Education practise science-based healthcare-seeking behaviour for the treatment of catarrh as opposed to other methods, with some limitations regarding laboratory diagnosis before treatment, immediate response to infection situations and resort to not only to use of prescribed drugs. On basis of this conclusion, it is recommended that students should be encouraged to go for a sputum test before treatment-seeking of catarrh as this will help in determining the actual problem instead of relying on blind treatment, the students should also be sensitised to report to health facilities for immediate diagnosis and treatment of catarrh whenever they had symptoms of the condition instead of opting for medication.

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