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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

An Assessment of Perceived Stigmatization of Patients Infected with COVID-19 in the Nation's Epicenter of the Pandemic: A Cross-Sectional Study of Residents of Agege, Lagos, Nigeria

Une Évaluation de la Stigmatisation Perçue des Patients Infectés par le COVID-19 dans l'Épicentre National de la Pandémie : Une Étude Transversale des Résidents d'Agege, Lagos, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: In some parts of Africa, the patients and those who survived COVID-19 are stigmatized and this has impeded the response activities put in place to control the pandemic. In spite of this, most efforts in preventing COVID-19 were geared towards the use of non-pharmacologic measures without corresponding measures to dissipate stigmatization in the community. Therefore, this study assessed the factors associated with perceived stigmatization of patients with COVID-19 among residents of Agege local government, Lagos State, Nigeria.

METHODS: We conducted a cross-sectional survey among 333 consenting residents recruited from Agege local government area (LGA) using a multi-stage sampling technique. A semi-structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire adapted from the People Living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (PLHIV) Stigma Index was used to collect data on socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge of COVID-19 and perceived stigmatization. Bivariate analysis was done using Chi-square and binary logistic regression was used to identify the determinants of perceived stigmatization at 5% level of significance.

RESULTS: The mean age of the respondents was 35.7 ± 13.6 years. Awareness about COVID-19 outbreak was 95.2%. Television (43.5%) and radio (36.9%) were the two major sources of information on COVID-19 infection and prevention. The proportions of the respondents who had poor knowledge and perceived stigmatization of COVID-19 patients were 50.0% and 47.7% respectively. A higher likelihood of perceived stigmatization was found among those aged 25 – 49 years (aOR= 3.1, 95% CI= 1.4 – 6.7), ≥ 50 years (aOR= 2.1, 95% CI= 1.1 – 3.9) and married respondents (aOR= 1.8, 95% CI= 1.1 – 2.9).

CONCLUSION: The study highlights the poor knowledge about COVID-19 and a high level of stigmatization. Hence, targeted health educational interventions are urgently needed for the residents of Agege, most especially among married respondents as well as the adults. WAJM 2021; 38(12): 1206–1215.

Keywords: Perception, stigmatization, COVID-19, Self-reporting, Nigeria.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: Dans certaines parties de l'Afrique, les patients et ceux qui ont survécu au COVID-19 sont stigmatisés et cela a entravé les activités de réponse mises en place pour contrôler la pandémie. Malgré cela, la plupart des efforts de prévention du COVID-19 ont été orientés vers l'utilisation de mesures non-pharmacologiques sans mesures correspondantes pour dissiper la stigmatisation au sein de la communauté. Par conséquent, cette étude a évalué les facteurs associés à la stigmatisation perçue des patients atteints de COVID-19 parmi les résidents du gouvernement local d'Agege, État de Lagos, Nigeria.

MÉTHODES: Nous avons réalisé une enquête transversale auprès de 333 résidents consentants recrutés dans la zone de gouvernement locale (LGA) d'Agege en utilisant une technique d'échantillonnage à plusieurs degrés. Un questionnaire semi-structuré, administré par un intervieweur, adapté de l'indice de stigmatisation des personnes vivant avec le virus de l'immunodéficience humaine (PVVIH). L'index stigmaté a été utilisé pour collecter des données sur les caractéristiques sociodémographiques, la connaissance de COVID-19 et la stigmatisation perçue. Une analyse bivariée a été réalisée à l'aide de l'outil Chi-square et une régression logistique binaire a été utilisée pour identifier les déterminants de la stigmatisation perçue au niveau de signification de 5%.

RÉSULTATS: L'âge moyen des répondants était de 35,7 ± 13,6 ans. La sensibilisation à l'épidémie de COVID-19 était de 95,2%. La télévision (43,5 %) et la radio (36,9 %) étaient les deux principales sources d'information sur l'infection et sa prévention. Les proportions des répondants qui avaient une mauvaise connaissance et stigmatisation perçue des patients atteints de COVID-19 étaient respectivement de 50,0% et de 47,7 % respectivement. Une probabilité plus élevée de perception de stigmatisation perçue a été constatée chez les personnes âgées de 25 à 49 ans (aOR=3,1, IC à 95% = 1,4 - 6,7), > 50 ans (aOR= 2,1, IC à 95% = 1,1 - 3,9) et les répondants mariés (aOR= 1,8, IC 95 % = 1,1 - 2,9).

CONCLUSION: L'étude met en évidence le manque de connaissances sur le COVID-19 et un niveau élevé de stigmatisation. Par conséquent, il est donc urgent de mettre en place des interventions éducatives pour les résidents d'Agege, en particulier parmi les répondants mariés ainsi que les adultes. WAJM 2021; 38(12): 1206–1215.

Mots clés: Perception, stigmatisation, COVID-19, autodéclaration, Nigeria.

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Abbreviations: ACS, Active Case Search; COVID-19, Corona Virus Disease, 2019; EVD, Ebola Virus Disease; HIV, Human Immunodeficiency Virus; LGAs, Local Government Areas; NCDC, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control; SARS, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome; WHO, World Health Organization.