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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION	1C
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS	1F
EDITORIAL NOTES – <b>Addressing the Outbreak of Diphtheria in Nigeria</b> .....	669
G. E. Erhabor	
– <b>Addressing the Menace of Surgical Site Infections in the West African Subregion: from Research to Policy</b> .....	671
A. O Ademuyiwa, I. Lawani, S. Tabiri, A. Nganwa, A, Bhangu, E. Harrison, D. Morton	
<b>ORIGINAL ARTICLES</b>	
<b>Awareness and Availability of the National School Health Policy in Selected Rural and Urban Primary Schools in Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria</b> .....	673
A. M. Adebayo, O. M. Dania, O. O. Ojifinni	
<b>Implementation and Effectiveness Outcomes of a Quality Improvement Intervention to Strengthen the Application of the World Health Organization Surgical Safety Checklist Tool in a Limited-Resource Setting</b> .....	678
M. A. Tolani, E. S. Nwabuoku, T. T. Sholadoye, L. O. Iji, H. Yusuf, M. Ahmed, A. Ibrahim	
<b>Inter-State Transmission of Lassa Fever during the 2015–2016 Lassa Outbreak in Nigeria: An Implication for Infection Prevention and Control Practices</b> .....	684
Y. Mohammed, U. I. Bello, C. C. Chinaka, M. Onuoha, M. Sarki, S. S. Yahaya, K. Suleiman, M. M. Dalhat	
<b>Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with Osteoarthritis of the Knee attending two Outpatient Clinics in Jos, Nigeria: A Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study</b> .....	689
A. C. Abimiku, S. L. Pitmang, P. Agaba	
<b>High-Impact Medical Education in Basic Life Support: A Comparative Study of Doctors and Medical Students in a Tertiary Hospital</b> .....	697
A. C. Owobu, F. O. Omosofe, C. I. Owobu, T. A. Azeke, M. A. Oyewusi, S. O. Ileli, H. E. Ugbeni	
<b>Pityriasis Rosea in Kaduna, North-West Nigeria: A 20-Year Experience</b> .....	704
H. Yahya	
<b>Quality of Life Assessment Scales in Vitiligo: A Comparative Study in a Tertiary Hospital in Benin City, Nigeria</b> .....	711
O. E. Ogunbor, R. C. Madubuko	
<b>Correlation between Red Cell Distribution Width and Glycaemic Control among Adults with Type II Diabetes Mellitus at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, North-Western Nigeria</b> .....	720
F. G. Mustapha, R. A. Dachi, M. Mahdi, N. A. Ya’u, A. G. Kuliya, I. Gezawa	
<b>Prevalence of Complete Edentulism in Adults and Older Nigerian Population</b> .....	724
O. A. Adenuga-Taiwo, E. C. Otoh, O. O. Onigbinde, O. O. Taiwo, O. A. Adeleke, J. A. Majekodunmi	
<b>Rupture of the Gravid Uterus: A Two-Decade Experience at a University Teaching Hospital in South-West, Nigeria</b> .....	730
J. A. Olamijulo, K. S. Okunade, O. Awofeso, C. M. Nwogu	
<b>Diagnostic and Therapeutic Roles of Microdochectomy and Subareolar Ducts Excision for Pathological Nipple Discharge in Lagos</b> .....	736
O. S. Balogun, A. O. Lawal, A. Makanjuola, O. A. Atoyebi	
<b>Prevalence of Post COVID-19 Vaccination Side Effects amongst Corp Members in an NYSC Orientation Camp in North Central Nigeria</b> .....	742
K. E. Udeogu, P. B. Kuza, Y. Y. Hauwa, N. Shehu, W. S. Akpan, A. M. Usman	
<b>Prevalence of Silent Gallstones on Ultrasound in a Nigerian Population</b> .....	748
O. A. Ogunleye, J. A. Akinmoladun, J. Oluwaniyi, J. Ogungbe, F. Kowe, M. Adefuye	
<b>Prevalence, Pattern and Factors Associated with Online Sexual Activity among Final Year Students in Osun State University, Nigeria</b> .....	753
A. G. Omisore, O. D. Adeyera, A. D. Ogungbemi, M. A. Folorunso, Z. A. Kosamat, M. O. A. Adeyemo, W. A. Tajudeen, O. Omobuwa, E. O. Farinloye	
<b>Prevalence and Determinants of Female-Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence against Heterosexual Men Living with HIV in a Semi Rural Community, Northern Nigeria</b> .....	761
A. O. Ashimi, S. Abubakar, F. B. Adewale, H. Ibrahim, T. G. Amole	
<b>CASE SERIES</b>	
<b>Diphtheria in two Nigerian Hospitals: What is New and the Implications for Control</b> .....	769
O. A. Oyedeji, F. A. Olagunju, J. B. Ayinde, Y. J. Osundare, B. G. Ologun	
<b>INDEX TO VOLUME 40, NO. 7, 2023</b>	
<b>Author Index</b> .....	773
<b>Subject Index</b> .....	774



### Awareness and Availability of the National School Health Policy in Selected Rural and Urban Primary Schools in Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria

#### *Connaissance et Disponibilité de la Politique Nationale de Santé Scolaire dans Certaines Écoles Primaires Rurales et Urbaines de l'État d'Oyo, dans le Sud-Ouest du Nigeria*

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#### ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND:** The School Health Programme (SHP) is key in actualizing optimal health and education for school-age children. Its implementation in Nigeria has been described as ineffective. Some of the challenges with implementation might be related to end users' lack of familiarity with the National School Health Policy (NSHPo). This study was conducted to determine awareness and availability of the NSHPo in Oyo State.

**METHODS:** A cross-sectional analytical study was carried out among teachers in selected rural and urban public and private primary schools in Oyo State. All consenting teachers from the schools from the purposively selected urban and rural local government areas in Oyo state participated. The questionnaire was divided into sections on sociodemographic characteristics, awareness, and availability of the NSHPo document. Summary statistics were computed as well as bivariate analysis using Chi-square test to explore the association between type of school and awareness of NSHPo at  $p < 0.05$ .

**RESULTS:** One thousand, one hundred and thirty-eight respondents (rural: 571; urban: 567) participated. In the rural primary schools, 49.4% of the respondents had ever heard of the NSHPo document. Of these, 24.1% had ever sighted a copy and 16.3% had ever seen a copy in the school office. None of the respondents owned a copy when verified during check listing. Awareness of the NSHPo document was higher among rural public-school respondents (52.2%) than rural private schools (43.5%), though not statistically significant ( $p = 0.052$ ). In the urban primary schools, 55.2% of the teachers had ever heard of the NSHPo document. Of these, 22.7% had ever sighted a copy and 18.2% had ever seen a copy in the school office. On verifying these claims, none of the respondents could produce a copy of the document. A significantly higher proportion (62.8%) of respondents in the urban public schools were aware of the NSHPo document compared with 42.1% of those in the urban private schools [ $p < 0.001$ ].

**CONCLUSION:** The NSHPo document was not sighted with any of the teachers in both rural and urban public and private schools visited. *WAJM 2023; 40(7): 673–677.*

**Keywords:** School health programme, National School Health Policy, Awareness, Availability, Nigeria.

#### RÉSUMÉ

**CONTEXTE:** Le programme de santé scolaire (PSES) est essentiel pour assurer une santé et une éducation optimales aux enfants d'âge scolaire. Sa mise en œuvre au Nigeria a été décrite comme inefficace. Certains des défis posés par la mise en œuvre pourraient être liés au manque de familiarité des utilisateurs finaux avec la politique nationale de santé scolaire (NSHPo). Cette étude a été menée pour déterminer la connaissance et la disponibilité de la NSHPo dans l'État d'Oyo.

**MÉTHODES:** Une étude analytique transversale a été menée auprès d'enseignants d'écoles primaires publiques et privées, rurales et urbaines, sélectionnées dans l'État d'Oyo. Tous les enseignants consentants des écoles des zones de gouvernement local urbaines et rurales sélectionnées à dessein dans l'État d'Oyo ont participé à l'étude. Le questionnaire était divisé en sections sur les caractéristiques sociodémographiques, la connaissance et la disponibilité du document NSHPo. Des statistiques sommaires ont été calculées ainsi qu'une analyse bivariée à l'aide du test du chi carré pour explorer l'association entre le type d'école et la connaissance du NSHPo à  $p < 0,05$ .

**RÉSULTATS:** Mille cent trente-huit répondants (ruraux : 571 ; urbains : 567) ont participé à l'étude. Dans les écoles primaires rurales, 49,4 % des personnes interrogées avaient déjà entendu parler du document NSHPo. Parmi eux, 24,1% en avaient déjà vu un exemplaire et 16,3% en avaient vu un dans le bureau de l'école. Aucune des personnes interrogées ne possédait d'exemplaire, comme cela a été vérifié lors de l'établissement de la liste. La connaissance du document NSHPo était plus élevée parmi les répondants des écoles publiques rurales (52,2%) que parmi ceux des écoles privées rurales (43,5%), bien que cela ne soit pas statistiquement significatif ( $p = 0,052$ ). Dans les écoles primaires urbaines, 55,2% des enseignants avaient déjà entendu parler du document NSHPo. Parmi eux, 22,7% avaient déjà vu une copie et 18,2% avaient déjà vu une copie dans le bureau de l'école. Lors de la vérification de ces affirmations, aucune des personnes interrogées n'a pu produire une copie du document. Une proportion significativement plus élevée (62,8%) des répondants des écoles publiques urbaines connaissaient le document NSHPo, contre 42,1% des répondants des écoles privées urbaines [ $p < 0,001$ ].

**CONCLUSION:** Le document NSHPo n'a été vu par aucun des enseignants des écoles publiques et privées rurales et urbaines visitées. *WAJM 2023; 40(7): 673–677.*

**Mots clés:** Programme de santé scolaire, Politique nationale de santé scolaire, Sensibilisation, Disponibilité, Nigeria.

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