

Health Education as A Tool for Curbing the Spread of Covid 19 Among Prison Inmates in Delta-State

Oyibo Rita Uzezi¹ & Ogbede Oritsematosan Marian²

¹Department of Physical & Health Education, College of Education, Warri, Delta State, Bsc Ed, M.Sc
Ed. Environmental and Safety Education

²Department of Physical & Health Education, College of Education, Warri, Delta State, B.sc, M.ed.
Health Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The emergence of COVID – 19 outbreak and pandemic has been a threat that affects every sector of Nigeria’s economy including prison inmates. To combat the COVID-19 outbreak, severe measures have been put forward to help curtail the spread. However, prison inmates are one group of people that little or no attention is given irrespective of the record of the COVID- 19 in the sector. This study was designed to examine health education as a tool for curbing COVID-19 among prison inmates in Delta State. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 2135 prison inmates in Delta State from which a sample size of 427 inmates was randomly selected from five prisons, using systematic sampling. Interviews and structured questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection. Data collection was done by the researchers and two research assistants (prison warders) in each of the five prisons visited. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha. The study revealed the relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread, the government’s actions to prevent the coronavirus spread and the relevance of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State. From the finding of the study, it was concluded that health education is a key tool for curbing the spread of covid-19 among inmates in Nigeria prison hence it was recommended that government should employ prison health educators to help provide health knowledge and information to prisoners in the prison.

INTRODUCTION

Prisons are not healthy places; communicable diseases are frequently transmitted among prisoners. With the recent COVID-19, much higher inmates will be at risk than the general population. Coronavirus is a severe acute respiratory syndrome which has emerged as a global health threat due to its accelerated geographical spread over the last two decades. Coronavirus is a group of viruses that can cause diseases in both animals and humans. The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) virus strain known as SARS-Cov19 is an example of the coronavirus. The first transmission to humans was in Wuhan, China. Since then, the virus has mostly spread through person-to-person contact (Adegboye et al 2020). Fever, cough, myalgia, and severe respiratory failure are all symptoms of the symptomatic phase (Sahu 2019). Many experts believe that the new strain of coronavirus likely originated in bats or pangolins.

In most Nigerian prisons, unhealthy circumstances like poor cleanliness and overcrowding are widespread, making it easy for COVID-19 to spread. Public health includes prison health, because prisons are an integral element of our society. Because the majority of inmates are released back into society, it’s important to be aware that prisons are becoming hotspots for communicable diseases like the coronavirus. According to Orunbo (2020), there is a lack of documentation on the enabling conditions in Nigerian prisons, which is exacerbated by insufficient monitoring and funding for infrastructure to reform offenders and the provision of proper healthcare facilities to improve inmates’ health.

In a similar vein, WHO (2020) asserted that the poor health of most prisons has resulted in infections and infectious diseases and that restricting the transmission of these diseases benefits both inmates and society at large, as well as decreasing the strain on the country's health system. NCDC (2020) proposed that the idea of parity of care be implemented in all prisons. As a result, medical facilities for urgent medical needs are required in Delta State Prison and Nigerian prisons in general.

Statement of Problem

The prison is built to provide rehabilitation and correctional facility for those who have violated the rules and regulations and lost the moral and ethical values of society. However, rather than leading a normal life upon release from prison and contributing positively to the growth and development of the community in which they reside, the majority of inmates returned sick and unhealthy. As they will be taking them to treatment, this will add to their family's stress and financial losses. A casual inspection of the current prevalence of COVID-19 and the massive death toll in the larger community leads one to wonder if anything has been done in the prison society to prevent the disease from spreading. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to examine health education as a tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State.

The objective of the Study

The major objective of the study was to examine health education as a tool for curbing the spread of Covid-19 among prison inmates in Delta State. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State.
2. To investigate the government's actions to prevent the coronavirus from spreading in Delta State's prisons.
3. To examine the relevance of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State.

Research Questions

For the study, the following research questions were formulated.

1. What is the relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State?
2. What are the government's actions put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State?
3. What is the relevance of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated to guide the study

1. There was no significant relationship between congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State.
2. Health education was not a significant tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of creating prison institutions around the world, including in Nigeria, is to provide rehabilitation and correctional facilities for persons who have broken society's norms and regulations. This is not to say that prisoners do not have certain rights, just as other free citizens have; the only right withheld from them is freedom of movement. Human rights are the foundational protections for human beings to be able to pursue happiness and self-respect, and the human rights act in most jurisdictions confirms that these rights do not end at the prison gates. In terms of health, every prison, for example, should have adequate health facilities and medical personnel to provide mental health and other healthcare services to inmates (Burki, 2020).

The world health organization has declared the coronavirus illness (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. Many individuals have become ill, some have died, and many businesses and religious institutions, including schools, have closed. Many countries have also been put under lockdown to prevent the sickness from spreading further. Numerous governments strive to provide good health care to their inhabitants, including inmates, following relevant international standards; yet, the illness outbreak has impacted many facilities around the world (Human Right Dimension 2020).

COVID-19 in Nigeria

COVID-19 was first reported in Nigeria on 27th February 2020 at Ewekoro in Ogun State. On 9th March a Nigerian citizen who had contact with an Italian citizen was declared positive. As of June 2021, confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide have risen beyond 182 million with more than 3.93 million deaths (WHO 2021) according to the Nigeria centre for disease control NCDC) as of June 28, 2021, the number of confirmed cases in Nigeria has risen beyond 167,532, with a total number of successfully treated and discharged fall at 163,984 while the number of deaths was put at 2,119.

As federal and state governments ramp up their capacities to prevent the virus from spreading further, provide for testing and contact tracing, expand isolation and treatment facilities, and mitigate the impact of their actions on the indigenous population and the economy, several segments of society are particularly vulnerable but have not yet been identified.

People in prisons and other places of imprisonment are one of these categories. While restricting access may be easier in such settings, once the virus has infiltrated a prison, as it has in many other nations, blocking future spread is far more difficult. It's nearly impossible to maintain social distance in an overloaded environment

In the prison sector, multiple options for the decongestion of prisons are currently being evaluated by the Attorney General's Office and the Nigerian Presidential Committee for the Decongestion of Correctional Centers. Those convicted (or accused) of minor offences, as well as those whose sentences would be completed soon, could be released sooner according to the Attorney General. Moreover, this appears the right moment to test the newly established framework for providing alternatives to detention. Simultaneously, when, if not now, is the best time to look into the health services available to prisoners? According to the Nelson Mandela Rules, "The provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility. Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status." Thus, the deployment of personal protective equipment, basic medical equipment and medicines as well as training for prison health workers as part of the overall effort to respond to the pandemic are of paramount importance. In addition to the above, there is also a place for creating awareness of the prevention of COVID-19 through health education.

COVID-19 in Correctional Facilities

SARS-COV-2 which is also known as COVID-19 spreads from person to person through close communities. When people with COVID-19 breathe out or cough, they expel tiny droplets that contain the virus. These droplets can enter the mouth or nose of someone without the virus, causing an infection to occur (NCDC). The most common way that this illness spreads is through close contact (congestion) with someone who has the infection. Though amnesty international has called on the federal government to take immediate actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in correctional centres, the human rights groups said inmates and detainees at police and military facilities across the country are at risk of contracting the coronavirus disease as they are held in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions that can be even more deadly in hot weather.

With the high risk of the coronavirus spread, the Delta State prisons still have overcrowded inmates in cell blocks, in Warri prison, each cell block was built to have between 6-8 inmates but now has between 10-15 inmates. The Delta States have five prisons which include Warri, Sapele, Agbor, Ogwahi-Uku and Kwale prisons respectively. Among these prisons, Warri, kwale and Agbor have the highest number of inmates in terms of population. Congestion in Nigerian prisons is staggering and a threat to the lives of prisoners especially at this time that requires social distancing to prevent the rapid spread of the disease (NAM, 2020).

Given the rapid increase in cases of Covid – 19 in Nigeria including the correctional or detention facilities in Nigeria, it appears that the authorities of these facilities are not prepared to tackle the outbreak of the disease. As a result, the Nigerian government and correctional or detention facility authorities should take immediate steps to combat Covid 19 by improving their disease prevention and control strategies. Additionally, something must be done to reduce overcrowding and find ways to improve the unhealthy, unsanitary, and completely inhumane environment of the state's correctional or detention facilities (Agency report 2020, March 19).

Congestion and Corona Virus in Prisons

Prisons are hotspots for Covid 19. According to the correctional service Act section 12, prisoners have the same right to health as anyone else, but the reality is very different (editor report March 18, 2020). We will not know the extent to which coronavirus disease has penetrated prisons in Nigeria and specifically Delta State. Testing capacity and supply are already constrained and the inmates are barely a priority (Van-Hort, 2020).

The Implication of Health Education for prevention of Covid-19 Spread in Prisons

Health education and promotion are important components of disease prevention activities in general, but during disease outbreaks and health emergencies, they play a key role in an active response by offering well-established tools (especially important in the absence of specific drugs and vaccines) to communicate and engage quickly and effectively with the inmates and prevent infections.

Nigeria is the most populated country with an overly congested prisons, and there is a higher tendency of the spread of Covid 19 disease among inmates. The massive congestion of inmates is a violation of physical distancing which will only serve as a medium to facilitate the spread of the virus. (Nweze et al, 2020). According to international law, the provision of health education and health care in prison is not limited to the treatment of sick prisoners. WHO (2010) states that the best way to prevent and slow down the transmission is to be well-informed about SARS-Cov-2, the disease its causes and how it spreads. This is where health education comes into play hence the need for the study.

Appraisal

The reviewed literature explained what a prison is and the importance of prison in reducing criminal activity in the society. It also discussed the brief history of covid 19 in Nigeria, its spread in prisons, and the use of health education as a tool for preventing the disease from spreading among inmates. However, the literature did not focus on how health education may be used to maximize its benefits in preventing coronavirus spread in overcrowded prisons in Delta State. This study filled the gaps.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design to examine health education as a tool for curbing the spread of Covid-19 among prison inmates in Delta State. This design was chosen because it involves studying a group of people by collecting, analyzing data and describing results obtained from sampled population considered to be representative of the entire population without altering the result, thereby unravelling the use of health education as a tool for curbing Covid-19 spread among prison inmates in Delta State.

The population of the Study

The population of the study will be comprised of a total of 2135 inmates from the five prisons in the state. This is shown in the table below

| Pris on | Number of Inmates |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Warri prison | 873 |
| Sapele prison | 375 |
| Agbor prison | 461 |
| Kwale prison | 490 |
| Ogwashi-Uku | 516 |
| Total | 2,715 |

(Source: Nigeria prison source 2020)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study adopted the proportionate sampling technique. Proportionate sampling is a sampling technique used when the population is comprised of several subgroups that are vastly different in numbers. The number of participants from each subgroup was determined by their relative to the entire population. Therefore, a sample size of 272 prison inmates was used to represent 10% of the inmates' population for the study

Sample Distribution of Inmates in Delta State

| S/n | Prisons | Males | 10% | Females | 10% | Population | 10% Sample Total |
|-----|-------------|-------|-----|---------|-----|------------|------------------|
| 1. | Warri | 829 | 83 | 44 | 4 | 873 | 87 |
| 2. | Sapele | 366 | 37 | 09 | 1 | 375 | 38 |
| 3. | Ugwashi-Uku | 449 | 45 | 12 | 1 | 461 | 46 |
| 4. | Agbor | 476 | 48 | 14 | 1 | 490 | 49 |
| 5. | Kwale | 498 | 50 | 18 | 2 | 516 | 52 |
| | Total | 2675 | 263 | 79 | 9 | 2715 | 272 |

Research Instruments

The research instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers, the researchers after a thorough review of related literature and other empirical studies. The instrument was divided into two sections A and B. Section “A” sought the demographic information of inmates constituting the sample. Section “B” consisted of 15 items which were designed to elicit responses on the use of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of coronavirus disease among inmates in Delta State prisons. The structured item consisted of 4-point Likert scale response option types ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA) (4-points), Agreed (A) (3-points), Disagreed (D) (2-points) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) (1-point).

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was done using the face and content validity methods by two research experts from the field of environmental health education. This was done by giving a copy of the self-structured questionnaire to two research experts respectively. The two experts went through the various items in the questionnaire thoroughly at two different intervals considering the objective/purpose of the study and research questions. After proper examination of the instrument, those items in it which were found unsuitable for the study were removed, corrections were made and the instrument was declared valid for use.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument were established using the Cronbach Alpha Method using single administration to twenty Prison inmates in Edo State prison which share similar characteristics with Delta State prison. The responses obtained were coded and correlated with Cronbach Alpha to obtain the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was declared reliable for the study as the reliability coefficient of the instrument was ascertained at 0.83.

Method of Data Collection

Data in the study was collected by the researchers and two trained research assistants (trained prison warders). After administration, the researchers waited to collect the questionnaire from the respondents. Duly completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately while others were collected at a later fixed date. After the final collection, the return rate was calculated. Out of the total 272 questionnaires administered, 251 were returned giving a percentage of 92.3% return rate.

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree (%) | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) | Strongly Disagree (%) | Mean | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|--------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|------|-------|-----------|
| 1. | Inmates in prison contract coronavirus when they are overcrowded in one area | 51 | 73 | 65 | 62 | 2.45 | 15.7 | Disagreed |
| 2. | Coronavirus diseases are more contagious among prisoners when the area is over-congested with more inmates. | 78 | 81 | 54 | 38 | 2.79 | 15.69 | Agreed |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|----|----|----|------|-------|-----------|
| 3. | Congestion in prison prevents the entry of fresh air thereby exposing inmates to the risk of contracting coronavirus. | 89 | 88 | 43 | 31 | 2.93 | 15.69 | Agreed |
| 4. | Prison congestion exposed inmates to combined usage of prison objects leading to the spread of coronavirus. | 92 | 64 | 52 | 43 | 2.82 | 15.7 | Agreed |
| 5. | Coughing and sneezing in the prison increase the risk of coronavirus spread among inmates as they are overcrowded. | 76 | 62 | 59 | 54 | 2.64 | 15.71 | Agreed |
| 6. | Lack of cross ventilation in this prison exposes inmates to the risk of coronavirus contraction | 63 | 52 | 64 | 72 | 2.42 | 15.72 | Disagreed |
| 7. | Irregular sanitation of the prison environment exposes inmates to coronavirus diseases | 86 | 81 | 53 | 31 | 2.88 | 15.69 | Agreed |
| 8. | The poor condition of the prison makes the prison environment susceptible to the spread of diseases including COVID 19. | 92 | 55 | 63 | 41 | 2.79 | 15.7 | Agreed |

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected in the study was analyzed with percentage and chi-square tests.

Result

The data collected from the respondents in the study were tabulated and calculated in the following tables as shown below.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and SD analysis of prison congestion and COVID-19 spread among inmates

78 69.5 57 46.5 N 251

Table 2 revealed the mean and standard deviation analysis of prison congestion and COVID-19 spread among inmates in Delta State prison. From the mean analysis in the table, it was revealed that the mean calculated value of items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8 (2.79, 2.93, 2.82, 2.64, 2.88 & 2.79) with the standard deviation of 15.69, 15.69, 15.7, 15.71, 15.69 & 15.7 respectively was higher than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicating agreed. It means that there is a relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread among prison

inmates in Delta State

Research Question 2.

What are the government’s actions put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean and SD Analysis government’s actions put in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree (%) | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) | Strongly Disagree (%) | Mean | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|--------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|------|-------|-----------|
| 1. | The government has put in place a wash hand basin for the inmate to prevent the spread of COVID-19. | 45 | 67 | 70 | 69 | 2.35 | 15.72 | Disagreed |
| 2. | Hand sanitisers are adequately provided in this prison by the government to reduce the rate of COVID-19. | 23 | 43 | 89 | 96 | 1.97 | 15.75 | Disagreed |
| 3. | The government regularly provided medical facilities for prisoners against COVID-19. | 12 | 25 | 102 | 112 | 1.75 | 15.76 | Disagreed |
| 4. | A medical person is routinely sent to this prison by the government for routine COVID-19 screening among inmates. | 20 | 55 | 109 | 177 | 2.55 | 15.71 | Agreed |
| 5. | The government usually organized a health talk for prisoners in this prison against COVID-19. | 45 | 76 | 72 | 58 | 2.43 | 15.72 | Disagreed |

Table 3 revealed the mean and standard deviation analysis of the government’s actions put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State. From the mean analysis in the table, it was revealed that all the item mean (2.35, 1.97, 1.75, & 2.43) except item 4 (2.55) were less than the criterion mean of 2.5 at 4 – point scale response options respectively It means sending medical personnel routinely to the prison by the government on routine COVID 19 screening among inmates in Delta State was the only government actions towards preventing the spread of COVID 19 among the inmates in Delta State prison.

Research Question 3

What is the relevance of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State?

Table 4: Mean and SD analysis of the relevance of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State

| S/N | Item | Strongly Agree (%) | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) | Strongly Disagree (%) | Mean | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|--------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|------|-------|----------|
| 1. | Most prisoners are aware of the causes of COVID 19 | 67 | 71 | 51 | 62 | 2.57 | 15.71 | Agreed |
| 2. | With the knowledge of the causes of COVID-19 you have acquired through health education, the rate of the disease spread has reduced | 78 | 81 | 54 | 38 | 2.69 | 15.70 | Agreed |
| 3. | Through health education, the practice of COVID-19 preventive measures has increased among the inmate in this prison. | 102 | 62 | 46 | 41 | 2.9 | 15.69 | Agreed |
| 4. | The COVID-19 health information and knowledge given to us in this prison help us to avoid anything that may likely expose us to COVID-19. | 92 | 55 | 63 | 41 | 2.79 | 15.7 | Agreed |
| 5. | Social distancing and hand sanitizing will be strictly practised among the inmate to prevent COVID through health education knowledge acquired. | 78 | 81 | 54 | 38 | 2.79 | 15.69 | Agreed |

Table 4 revealed the mean and standard deviation analysis of the relevance of health education as a tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State. From the mean analysis in the table, it was revealed that all the item mean (2.79, 2.69, 2.9, 2.79 & 2.79) were greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 at 4 – point scale response options respectively. This means most prisoners are aware of the causes of COVID-19; with the knowledge of the causes of COVID 19 prisoners acquired through health education, the rate of the disease spread has reduced; through health education, the practice of COVID-19 preventive measures have increased among inmate in this prison; the COVID 19 health information and knowledge given to the inmate in the prison help them to avoid anything that may likely expose them to COVID 19; and that social distancing and hand sanitizing strictly practice among the inmate help them to prevent COVID through health education knowledge they acquired.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State.

Table 5: Chi-square test of the relationship between congestion and spread of coronavirus spread among Prison inmates

| Res. | Obs. | Exp. | χ^2_{cal} | $\chi^2_{crit.}$ | df. | Sig. | Decision |
|----------------|------|------|----------------|------------------|-----|------|----------|
| Strongly Agree | 78 | 62.8 | 8.8 | 7.815 | 3 | 0.05 | Rejected |
| Agree | 69 | 62.8 | | | | | |
| Disagree | 57 | 62.8 | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 47 | 62.8 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 251 | 251 | | | | | |

The table above revealed the chi-square (χ^2) analysis of the significant relationship between congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State. From the χ^2 analysis in the table, it was found that the χ^2 calculated value (8.8) is higher than the χ^2 critical value (7.815) under the degree of freedom 3 at 0.05 significant level. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State.

Ho 2: Health education is not a significant tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State.

Table 5: Chi-square test of health education as a significant tool for curbing the spread of coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State

| Res. | Obs. | Exp. | χ^2_{cal} | $\chi^2_{crit.}$ | df. | Sig. | Decision |
|----------------|------|------|----------------|------------------|-----|------|----------|
| Strongly Agree | 83 | 62.8 | 14.19 | 7.815 | 3 | 0.05 | Rejected |
| Agree | 70 | 62.8 | | | | | |
| Disagree | 54 | 62.8 | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 44 | 62.8 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 251 | 251 | | | | | |

The table above revealed the chi-square (χ^2) analysis of health education as a significant tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State. From the χ^2 analysis in the table, it was found that the χ^2 calculated value (14.19) is higher than the χ^2 critical value (7.815) under the degree of freedom 3 at 0.05 significant level. Thus, the null hypothesis stated that health education is not a significant tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State. was rejected. This means that health education is not a significant tool for curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates in Delta State.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the data analysis in the study, the following results were found

1. There is a relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State.
2. The government’s actions put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmate

in Delta State is poor.

3. Health education plays a significant role in curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates.
4. The strategies to adopt health education as a preventive tool for curbing the spread of COVID-19 and its outbreak among prison inmates. Its carry-over effects in society include the creation of awareness, provision of health information, enlightenment campaigns, etc.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study aimed at examining the role of health education as a tool for curbing COVID-19 among prison inmates in Delta State. A total of 251 respondents participated in the study. Findings from the study revealed that there is a relationship between prison congestion and coronavirus spread among prison inmates in Delta State. It was revealed that coronavirus disease is more contagious among prisoners when the area is over-congested with more inmates. congestion in prison prevent the entry of fresh air thereby exposing inmate to the risk of contraction of coronavirus, prison congestion expose inmate to combined usage of prison objects leading to the spread of coronavirus, coughing and sneezing in the prison increase the risk of coronavirus spread among inmates as they are overcrowded, irregular sanitation of the prison environment exposes inmates to coronavirus diseases and that poor condition of the prison makes the prison environment susceptible to the spread of diseases including COVID 19. These findings corroborated the report and assertion of the editor's report of March 18, (2020) and Van-Hort (2020) which prisons are a hotspot for Covid 19. According to the correctional service Act section 12, prisoners have the same right to health as anyone else, but the reality is very different as most of the prisons are over congested exposing inmates to the contraction of many diseases including the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The result from the study also revealed that the government's actions put in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmate in Delta State is poor. This is a fact as most prisons are abandoned by the government and prisoners are dying of many preventable illnesses due to poor provision of medical and health care facilities to the prison by the government.

It was also found that health education plays a significant role in curbing the spread of the coronavirus among prison inmates. Health education helps to provide reliable health information and knowledge to prisoners on the dos and don'ts of many health issues including the prevention of all kinds of diseases. Through knowledge of health education, many individuals become aware of what to do to avoid the contraction and spread of diseases including COVID-19. During the COVID-19 pandemic health education, without doubt, play a central role in the provision of knowledge on the COVID-19 spread, signs and symptoms, and prevention and control measures against the disease's spread. This is what most inmate needs to prevent themselves in addition to the provision of necessary facilities for optimal care and control measure against the disease. This finding is in line with the review of the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC) (2020) which stated that utilizing a scientifically validated health education intervention to disseminate COVID-19 messaging to children and other members of society ensures that reliable and factual information is delivered through official channels (such as prison) to an audience (inmates) who are considered to be highly vulnerable to becoming victims of misinformation or 'infodemics'. This finding also confirmed the conclusion of Darren, et al (2020) in their study which concluded health education and promotion are important components of disease prevention activities in general, but during disease outbreaks and health emergencies, they play a key role in an active response by offering well-established tools (especially important in the absence of specific drug therapies and vaccines) to communicate and engage quickly and effectively with the public and prevent infections. Messaging specifically targeting children who may well be acting as "silent" transmitters of COVID-19 is presently lacking.

CONCLUSION

A prison is a risky place for the contraction of diseases especially COVID 19 which is highly contagious. Inmates in Nigerian prisons particularly in Delta State are highly exposed to the risk of contraction of COVID-19 like other contagious diseases due to the unconducive nature of the prison environment and the absence of health preventive facilities and materials. The inmates in Nigeria's prison care prevent themselves from the spread of many diseases including the novel coronal virus when given the opportunity and enlighten properly through prison health education. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that health education is a key tool for curbing the spread of COVID-19 among inmates in Nigerian prisons hence, necessary provisions should be given to prison health education to help realize this core goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Government should employ prison health educators to help provide health knowledge and information to prisoners in the prison.
2. Media health education should be extended to the prison to allow an inmate to have access to health information regarding COVID-19 preventive measures.
3. COVID-19 prevention posters, bills and pictures should be pasted on the wall of the prison to remind prisoners of how to prevent themselves from COVID-19.
4. Government should expand the prison yard to reduce the congestion on inmates which mostly exposed them to the risk of COVID-19 and other contagious diseases.

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