

Dementia Care in Nigeria: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Referral Practices among Primary Health Care Workers

P3-14

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Location is destiny (p<0.001). Not age, gender or education, the facility itself drove knowledge. Area 2 scored 26.4; Karu just 22.1

The caregiver paradox (p=0.048). PHWs who had cared for a dementia patient held lower attitude scores; a likely sign of burnout.

Knowledge drives referrals; attitude doesn’t (p=0.369). Only knowledge predicted behaviour; positive attitudes alone changed nothing

Tenure ≠ competence (r=0.635). Years in post strongly lifted attitudes & referrals but not knowledge. Experience doesn’t teach what training does

INTRODUCTION	METHODS	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS	REFERENCES
Dementia is a growing public health challenge in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), yet remains underrecognized and poorly integrated into primary healthcare systems in Nigeria. Primary health workers (PHWs) are the first point of contact for older adults and play a critical role in early recognition, referral, and support for people living with dementia. However, limited evidence exists on PHWs’ preparedness to deliver dementia-related care in Nigeria.	A cross-sectional study was conducted among 182 PHWs working in Basic Health Care Provision Fund-supported primary healthcare centres in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire incorporating the Alzheimer’s Disease Knowledge Scale, the Dementia Attitudes Scale, and items assessing dementia referral practices. Descriptive and inferential analyses were performed using SPSS to examine levels of knowledge, attitudes, and referral practices, as well as associated factors. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant institutional review boards.	PHWs demonstrated limited knowledge of dementia (mean Alzheimer’s Disease Knowledge Scale score = 18.11 ± 2.51), with notable gaps in understanding early symptoms, prevention, and management. Attitudes toward dementia were mixed, with evidence of stigma and discomfort in providing direct care. Referral practices were inconsistent, and many respondents reported limited awareness of diagnostic tools and structured referral pathways. Prior dementia-related training and longer professional experience were significantly associated with higher knowledge scores and better referral practices (p < 0.05). Facility location was also significantly associated with knowledge levels, indicating variability in dementia preparedness across primary healthcare centres.	This study highlights substantial gaps in dementia preparedness - dementia knowledge, attitudes, and referral practices among frontline health workers (PHWs) in Nigeria’s primary healthcare system. Strengthening dementia-specific training, supervision, and referral pathways within primary care is essential for improving early detection, reducing stigma, and enhancing continuity of care. Integrating dementia care into existing primary healthcare reforms represents a critical opportunity to strengthen health system preparedness in LMIC settings.	Aregbeshola, B. S., and Khan, S. M. (2017). Primary Health Care in Nigeria: 24 Years after Oikoye Ransome-Kuti’s Leadership. <i>Frontiers in public health</i>, 5, 48. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2017.00048. Asamoah-Gyedu J.K. (2015). Witchcraft accusations and Christianity in Africa. <i>Int Bull Missionary Res.</i> 39:23–7. 10.1177/239693931503900107 Alzheimer’s Association (2024). Down Syndrome and Alzheimer’s Disease. https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia/types-of-dementia/down-syndrome#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20National%20Down,their%2060s%20have%20Alzheimer’s%20dementia. Accessed 5/6/24 Alzheimer’s Disease International. (2022, September 21). World Alzheimer Report 2022: The cost of dementia. https://www.alzint.org/resource/world-alzheimer-report-2022/. Accessed 6/5/2024 Alzheimer’s Disease International (2021). Dementia: Facts and Figures. https://www.alzint.org/about/dementia-facts-figures/dementia-statistics/. Accessed 10/5/24 Zhao, W., Moyle, W., Wu, M.-L.W. and Petsy, H. (2022). Hospital healthcare professionals’ knowledge of dementia and attitudes towards dementia care: A cross-sectional study. <i>J Clin Nurs</i>, 31: 1786-1799. https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15590 Zhao, W., Jones, C., Wu, M., and Moyle, W. (2020). Healthcare professionals’ dementia knowledge and attitudes towards dementia care and family carers’ perceptions of dementia care in China: An integrative review. <i>Journal of Clinical Nursing</i>. 31. 10.1111/jocn.15451
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