Public Health Impact and Risk Factors Associated with Uterine Leiomyomata(UL) Among Women in Imo State

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Abstract : Uterine Leiomyomata (ULs) are the most frequently occurring pelvic and gynaecologic tumors in premenopausal women, occurring globally with a prevalence of 21.4%. UL represents a major public health problem in African women; therefore, this study aimed to reveal public health impact and risk factors associated with uterine leiomyomata among women in Imo state. A convenience sample of 2965 women was studied for gynaecological cases from October 2020 to March 2021 at the selected clinics of study. Eligible women were recruited to participate in a non interventional descriptive cross-sectional study. Data on socio demographic and gynaecological characteristics, BMI, parity, age, age at menarche, knowledge, attitudes, and perception were collected using a structured questionnaire, guided interviews, anthropometrics, and haematological tests. These were analyzed using SPSS Version 23. Associations between continuous variables were analysed appropriately and tested at 95% confidence level and standard error of 5%. A total of 652(22.0%) were diagnosed having uterine Leiomyomata (UL), and the overall prevalence of UF at clinics/Diagnostic centre in Imo State was 22%. A total of 652 women (46.1%) responded. More than half of the women had a parity of zero (1623: 54.8%), 664 (22.4%) had a parity of 1-2, and 491 (16.6%) had a parity of 3-4. Majority (68.6%) indicated that they experience an irregular menstrual cycle, and a similar proportion (67%) number experience pelvic pain. Age was found as a significant associating factor of uterine fibroids in this study (p=0.046, χ2= 6.158), lowest among the women between 16 to 25 years old and highest among the women between 36 – 45 years of age. The rate of UF was found to be 62.1% on the studied women menarche age of 11 years old or less while it was approximately 18% among the women whose age at menarche were at least 14 years old. Education ((p=0.003, χ^2= 13.826), residency (p=0.066, χ^2= 3.372). BMI (p= 0.000, χ^2=102.36) were significantly associated with the risk of UL. Some of the Clinical presentation includes anaemia, abdominal pelvic mass, and infertility. The poor positive perception was obtained on the general perception (16.7%) as well as on treatment seeking behavior (28%). The study concluded that UL had a significant impact on health related quality of life on respondents due to its relatively high prevalence and their probable impact on patient's quality of life.UL was especially prevalent in women aged between 36 to 45 years, nulliparous women, and women of higher BMI. Community enlightenment to enhance knowledge, attitude, and perception on fibroids and risk factors necessary to ensure early diagnosis and presentation, including patient centered treatment option.
Keywords : fibroids, prevalence, risk factors, body mass index, menarche, anaemia, KAP

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