

## Knowledge, Perception and Practice of Deworming among Mothers of Under-Five Children in Rural Communities of Lafia Local Government Area, North Central Nigeria

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**Abstract :** Nigeria has the second highest prevalence of intestinal worms globally, which has not declined since the 1970s, especially in rural communities. Identifying the gaps in self-care practice will pave a way for a suitable intervention. This study investigated the knowledge, perception, and practice of deworming among mothers of under-five children in rural communities of Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State. This study was descriptive cross-sectional and involved 419 mothers selected by systematic sampling technique. Information was obtained using a valid interviewer-questionnaire. Knowledge, perception, and practice was measured using a 10-point scale for each variable, respectively. Scores of 0-4, >4-6, and >6 were categorised as poor, average/fair, and good, respectively, at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Respondents' age was  $30.3 \pm 9.2$  years; 46.5% were into trading, 26.7% were unemployed, 9.3% were skilled labour, and 7.4% were farmers. On literacy, secondary school (25.5%) while 9.1% above secondary school. Many (51.1%) had 2-3 children, while 42.2% had 5 or more children. Most of the respondents (96.2%) had good knowledge of deworming, and 3.8% had fair knowledge. Using multivariate model, Mothers between the ages of 25-34 years were 20 times likely to be more knowledgeable, given they have access to health information (O.R 2.39 -164.31). Most (62.3%) had good perception scores, 33.2% had fair scores, while 4.5% had poor perception scores. Majority (66.4%) had a good deworming practice of deworming, 66.4% had good, 28.4% had fair, and 5.3% had poor practice. The test of association between Parent's literacy level, religion, and age were significantly associated with the level of knowledge of deworming. Knowledge of deworming was above average; perception and practice was good. Women of ages 25-34 years could be trained as community volunteers to propagate the right information about deworming in rural communities, especially among young women of ages 13-19 years. Preferred channels to obtaining health information identified in the study should be explored.

**Keywords :** deworming, mothers of under-five, intestinal worms, rural communities

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