

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Patient Referral among Patent and Proprietary Medicine Vendors in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State

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Abstract : Background: With the limited number of trained health care providers in Nigeria, patent and proprietary medicine vendors (PPMVs) are inevitable and highly needed especially in the rural areas for the supply of drugs in treating minor illnesses. These vendors serve as a crucial link between the healthcare system and the community, aiding in the distribution of medications and healthcare information, particularly in areas with limited hospital infrastructure. Objectives: The study set to measure the participants' knowledge, attitude and patient referral practice and any association of their characteristics with patient referral. Methodology: This cross-sectional descriptive survey was conducted among PPMVs in Obio-Akpor LGA of Rivers State. Data was collected using a self-administered structured questionnaire and analysed using SPSS version 25. Results: The study showed that 18.3% had adequate knowledge, 62.4% had moderate knowledge and 19.2% had poor knowledge. Attitude was moderate among 73.4% of the study participants with only 13% showing adequate attitude. In reporting their referral practice, 34% showed poor referral practice, 58% reported moderate practice and only 8% showed adequate practice. Conclusion: Various facilitators as well as barriers to patient referral were highlighted by the respondents. This study indicated that while attitude and practice were moderate among respondents, the percentage of PPMVs with the adequate knowledge of patient referral was high. To enhance the effectiveness of patient referrals, addressing barriers to referral and promoting education and training for PPMVs are critical steps forward.

Keywords : knowledge, attitude, practice, barriers, facilitators, patent medicine vendor, referral

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