

Knowledge and Practice on the Use of Rapid Diagnostic Test in Testing for Malaria Among Community Health Extension Workers in the Federal Capital Territory

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Malaria remains a major public health issue, causing high levels of illness and death worldwide, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where about 90% of all malaria deaths occur. Rapid diagnostic tests help improve accurate diagnosis at community level. Despite the proven effectiveness of Rapid Diagnostic Tests in malaria diagnosis, health workers (HWs), especially in sub-Saharan Africa, sometimes prescribe antimalarial drugs for patients with negative Rapid Diagnostic Test results even when it is obvious that not giving such prescriptions will do no harm to the patient. Specifically, this study aimed to assess the relationship between the knowledge and practice on the use of RDTs in testing for malaria among CHEWs.

Objectives: To assess the level of knowledge about Rapid Diagnostic Test kits among Community Health Extension workers in the Federal Capital Territory. To ascertain the practice of Community Health Extension workers in using Rapid Diagnostic Test kits in testing for malaria in the Federal Capital Territory. To evaluate factors associated with accurate Rapid Diagnostic Test use and areas for improvement. To establish the relationship between the knowledge and practice of the use of Rapid Diagnostic Test Kit in testing for malaria among Community Health Extension Workers in the Federal Capital Territory.

Methodology: Study Area: Primary health care centers within Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) and Kuje Area Council (KAC) in the Federal Capital Territory. Study Design: Descriptive cross-sectional survey. Study Population: Community Health Extension Workers within the Abuja Municipal Area Council and Kuje Area Council. Sample size: 191. Sampling Technique: Multistage sampling technique. Data Collection: A quantitative method was used for the data collection of this research, which contained a self-administered questionnaire used to assess knowledge and practices regarding the use of Rapid Diagnostic Test Kits in testing for malaria. Data Analysis: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for descriptive and inferential statistics. Ethical approval: Obtained from the Bingham University Teaching Hospital Head Research and Ethics Committee, Abuja Municipal Area Council and Kuje Area Council.

Results: The results showed that 82.0% of respondents demonstrated good knowledge levels in the use of RDTs, while 18.0% had poor knowledge. 86.8% of respondents had received formal training on the use of RDTs which contributed to good knowledge and practices. From the results, there was a statistically significant association between knowledge and practice levels on the use of Rapid Diagnostic Tests among Community Health Extension Workers ($\chi^2 = 0.0214$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that better knowledge was linked to better practice.

Conclusion: The study concluded that CHEWs possess high level of knowledge and practice in the use of RDTs. However, the findings show that the availability of RDTs contribute to the practice levels in malaria diagnosis which can further help in proper management of malaria cases. The lack of training also has implications on the knowledge and practice on the use of RDTs in testing for malaria ranging from improper utilization of kits which can bring about improper diagnosis malaria.

