

Assessment of Digital Advocacy Strategies for Enhancing Family Planning Awareness and Uptake Among Nigerian Youth in The Federal Capital Territory

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ABSTRACT

Family planning (FP) is a cornerstone of reproductive health and a proven strategy for reducing maternal and child mortality. In Nigeria, despite the rapid growth of digital technology and social media use, FP uptake among youths remains suboptimal. My study explored how digital advocacy influences FP awareness and service uptake among youths in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), addressing a critical gap in youth-centred health communication. A cross-sectional descriptive design was adopted, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 422 respondents across Abuja Municipal and Bwari Area Councils, as well as online participants, using pre-tested questionnaires and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests in SPSS (version 27), while qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis. Findings revealed high awareness of FP methods, largely driven by digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Among respondents, condoms (32%) and pills (21%) were the most commonly known methods, followed by natural methods (18.4%), injections (16%), IUDs (10%), implants (1.7%), and surgical options (0.9%). Despite this awareness, only about two-thirds reported using any FP method. Although Chi-square tests indicated no statistically significant association between digital advocacy exposure and FP uptake ($p > 0.05$), respondents who frequently engaged with digital content demonstrated more positive attitudes and stronger intentions to use contraceptives. Qualitative insights highlighted the appeal of digital campaigns for their accessibility and anonymity, but also noted challenges such as misinformation and cultural resistance. The study concludes that digital advocacy is important for raising awareness and shaping favourable perceptions, even if actual uptake remains constrained by socio-cultural and service-related barriers. It recommends that reproductive health programs strengthen youth-focused digital campaigns, integrate credible online counselling, and partner with social media influencers to deliver accurate, relatable content. These strategies can help bridge the gap between awareness and action, advancing Nigeria's progress toward universal access to reproductive health services.

