



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

### Care Seeking Pattern, Knowledge and Response of Caregivers to Childhood Diarrhoea in a Sub-urban Community in Lagos, Nigeria

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#### ABSTRACT

**Background** Diarrhoea remains one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among children under 5 years old in spite of availability of effective treatment. Families and communities have been identified as key stakeholders to the improvement of child survival in diarrhoea.

**Objective** This study was set to determine caregivers' knowledge and response to diarrhoea within the first 24 hours, evaluate their care-seeking pattern and identify determinants of response.

**Method** A descriptive cross-sectional survey of 1,236 caregivers of children under five years was carried out in a sub-urban community in Lagos. Pretested, structured questionnaire was administered to caregivers whose children had experienced diarrhoea within one month of survey. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.0.

**Results** The mean age of caregivers was 30.2 years  $\pm$  5.305 with 1,201 (97.2%) being biological mothers of the children. Majority, 848 (68.6%) correctly recognized diarrhoea as passage of three or more watery stools within a 24-hour period. Knowledge of correct cause of diarrhoea was poor (332; 26.8%) and 797 (64.5%) perceived diarrhoea as a serious condition. While 48.9% opted for home treatment, 35.3% offered no care to the child. Only 119 (9.9%) respondents sort care in government health facilities.

**Conclusion** Majority of caregivers kept the child at home either treating them or not rendering care. Care seeking at government health facilities was low. Age category of child, educational status of caregiver, number of children being cared for by caregiver and overall knowledge of diarrhoea were significantly associated with response within the first 24 hours.

**Keywords:** Diarrhoea, caregiver, care seeking behaviour, response, healthcare facility