

The Effects of Maternal Health Literacy on Child Health Outcomes in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Both education and health are core to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Health status can be intergenerational as parents often transfer their knowledge of health practices to their children. Health knowledge and literacy is essential for quality health outcomes which is why health literacy is important for the achievement of SDG 3 and SDG4. Children are vulnerable and depend on the health knowledge and literacy of their parents for quality health outcomes. It has been argued that intergenerational transfer of health status starts as early as childhood or even in the womb. Child health is a fundamental human right and an essential foundation for human development. This study therefore aims at focusing on a particular aspect of the intergenerational transfer that affects mother's health education and subsequently the health their young children. The paper examines the effects of maternal health literacy on child health outcomes in Nigeria. In spite of the existence of different components of health literacy, few attempts have been made to examine the effects of these components of health literacy issues empirically in a comprehensive manner. In fact, the specific role of health literacy as one of the main elements of social determinants of health in Nigeria has only been given limited consideration. The obvious link between parental health literacy and good health status of the child is the mother's ability to obtain and process health information.

This paper is restricted to four components of maternal health literacy namely, ability to seek and obtain health information, ability to process health information, ability to understand and interpret health information, and ability to appropriately use health information. Child health services will be restricted to those available in the primary and secondary healthcare institutions in randomly selected sites in South west Nigeria. In doing this the paper will construct a health literacy scale for mothers in Nigeria taking into consideration the core areas of health literacy. The computation of Health literacy Scale for Mothers is based on the score of the health literacy scale based on the score of each participants will be divided into three: into Inadequate, Marginal and Adequate. A model examining the effect of health literacy on child health outcome would then be estimated.

The results is expected to indicate the nature and magnitude of maternal health literacy in Nigeria as well as effects of health literacy on child health outcomes in Nigeria. This will be complement with expected relationships between education of the mothers, age and birth order of children and their significant effects on child health outcomes. The results will definitely add to knowledge on options that can be followed towards achieving some of the SDGs.