

# Awareness and Attitude of Male Journalists in Lagos State towards Prostate Cancer Screening

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## Abstract

Prostate Cancer is a health issue that is generating growing concerns globally. Awareness about the disease is necessary to create the right attitude among men towards screening as a diagnostic measure. This study assessed the awareness and attitude of male journalists in Lagos towards Prostate cancer screening. It adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design with the use of a structured questionnaire to collect data from a total of 192 male journalists, purposively selected from six Lagos-based media houses. Statistical Analysis was done using SPSS version 23. Results showed that there was a high level of awareness of Prostate cancer among male journalists in Lagos but this did not lead to a positive attitude towards Prostate cancer screening among them. The authors recommended that policymakers should be deliberate at ensuring positive attitude towards Prostate cancer screening among, not just male journalists, but other professionals by making the screening process mandatory, free and biennial.

**Keywords:** Prostate cancer; Cancer screening; Male journalists; Awareness; Attitude; Cognitive dissonance

## Impact Statement

Although Prostate cancer as a cancer type affects the male gender, its effects rub off on families and the global community. Two strong weapons for fighting this disease are awareness and action. This study shows that journalists in Lagos, Nigeria were aware about the dangers of Prostate cancer and the importance of Prostate cancer screening, but were not acting on their knowledge. This is probably true of male journalists in many parts of the world. If journalists do not show sufficient concern about their Prostate health in spite of their knowledge, what chances are there that other members of the society do? Results of this study should

stimulate discourses among behavioural scientists and motivate governments and public policy designers to evolve strategies to translate Prostate cancer awareness into action.

## Introduction

Prostate cancer is a type of cancer that occurs in the prostate - a walnut-shaped gland in men that produces the seminal fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. Early Prostate cancer does not have symptoms but if left untreated, it may metastasize to nearby lymph nodes, bones, or other organs resulting in men experiencing aches and pains in the bones, pelvis, hips, ribs, and back [1]. Prostate cancer has been associated with a number of risk factors. Although its exact cause is unknown, growing older increases a man's risk of Prostate cancer.

In Nigeria, Prostate cancer is a disease of public health concern. A study by Ogunbiyi & Shittu [2], affirmed Prostate cancer as the most common cancer among Nigerian men and constituting 11 % of all male cancer cases studied. Results of an earlier study by Osegbe [3], revealed high morbidity and mortality of this disease with an annual death rate at 20,000 and with a hospital incidence of 127 per 100,000. A more recent study in South Western Nigeria also reported a hospital prevalence rate of 182.5 per 100,000 male admissions in hospitals [4].

Negative attitude towards Prostate cancer screening is arguably responsible for increased Prostate cancer-induced deaths in Nigeria, pointing to the need for more awareness and change of attitude towards screening for the disease.

Shittu and Kamara [5], observed that in order to raise the awareness level and create the right attitude by encouraging men to do Prostate cancer screening in Nigeria, media professionals have produced and disseminated messages on the morbidity and mortality of the health condition generally among the people, particularly the educated class. However, evidence of the outcome and impact of such media efforts is not known even among male journalists who are in the

crusade of spreading information and generating the right attitude.

## The Problem

Cases of morbidity and mortality from Prostate cancer are on the increase in Nigeria as in other developing societies [4], while it is declining in advanced countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK, etc. [6]. Although the availability of medical facilities and personnel is a critical factor, the differences in the prevalence and risk levels between the two societies is principally awareness and the right attitude towards early diagnosis. Even among the educated class in Nigeria, awareness is suspected to be low and attitude negative about the need for Prostate cancer screening. The need thus arises to examine the awareness level of, and attitude towards Prostate cancer screening among journalists, not just because they are in the educated class but more importantly that they are in the forefront of the awareness creation and attitude formation crusades. This study is thus an examination on the extent to which journalists in Lagos state, Nigeria as content creators and message disseminators on Prostate cancer screening comply with the crusade they propagate.

## Study Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant influence of demography on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening.

H2: There is a significant influence of awareness of Prostate cancer on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening.

## Scope of the Study

This study focused on the level of awareness of Prostate cancer and the attitude towards screening for the health condition among male journalists in Lagos state, Nigeria. Of particular focus were male journalists aged 40 years and above, who were registered members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Lagos chapter. The study was conducted between September and December 2018.

## Literature Review

Several scholars and medical practitioners have adjudged Prostate cancer as a killer disease of public interest. Studies conducted on the subject matter in Nigeria and across the African continent affirmed that it is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among Nigerian men. According to Agbugui, et al. [7], cancer of the Prostate is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the elderly male population. Another report by Agbugui, et al. [8] corroborated the fact that cancer of the Prostate is a major cause of death among men in Benin city, Nigeria. A similar study conducted in Kumasi metropolis of Ghana, by Amoah, et al. [9], Prostate cancer was rated as the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among men in the world and in Ghana, the most frequently diagnosed cancer among men. Likewise, in the study by

Nakandi et al., [10], it was reported that the incidence of Prostate cancer in Uganda is one of the highest recorded in Africa. This health condition is, however, not limited to Africa as it occurs in other parts of the world. Arnold-Reed et al. [11], in an Australian study confirmed that Prostate cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed non-cutaneous cancer and the second most common cause of cancer mortality in Australia

Extant literature and medical evidences suggest that early detection is a major prescription for controlling and abating Prostate cancer. Early diagnosis greatly affects treatment success of which the most important components are education (knowledge) and motivation of the target population to participate in early diagnostic procedures (World Health Organisation, 2013). However, awareness on Prostate cancer among the countries studied differs, while some claimed that awareness of Prostate cancer is high, others asserted that it was abysmally low [7,8,10,11].

Attitude towards screening for Prostate cancer is dependent on awareness of the public about the health condition. Low level of awareness leads to lack of or inadequate knowledge, negative perception and attitude, which are barriers to screening and early detection of the disease. Arnold-Reed et al. [11], reported a deficit in knowledge about Prostate cancer among men in the at-risk age group, to include delay diagnosis and treatment. The report of the 2019 American Cancer Society, which stated that Prostate cancer death rates decreased by 3.5% per year between 2003 and 2012 due to improvements in early detection and treatment in America, confirmed the correlation between the right attitude towards screening through awareness and reduction in prevalence and risk rates. Lower mortality is reported in developed countries due to early detection, while in a developing countries like Nigeria where there is apathy towards cancer screening, most cancer victims are diagnosed with the late stage incurable tumours [10]. Negative attitude towards Prostate cancer screening, leading to increased death rates in Nigeria, calls for the need for more awareness and attitude change towards screening for the disease.

The mass media are the most accessible, pervasive and influential sources of information about health conditions in the society. The Nigerian media have been instrumental in designing, championing and supporting campaigns of health in the areas of malaria, immunization, reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, Ebola, Prostate cancer, general disease prevention and healthy living practices [12,13]. The importance of the media in health (as in other spheres of life) could be understood in their pervasiveness in every aspect of society an attribute that could be better leveraged for community and public health. Awareness and knowledge creation, as well as generation of the right attitude towards the screening of Prostate cancer, is thus within the purview of ascribed functions of the mass media. Saddled with this responsibility are media professionals, who, as parts of the society perform this function through various agenda setting platforms. A key function of the mass media is routine information dissemination called the surveillance function, by which they create awareness and promote the right attitude towards

Prostate cancer screening. The surveillance function is the news and information dissemination function of the mass media. It involves the routine journalistic functions of the media of monitoring trends and happenings in the society and reporting them to the people [14,15]. According to Dominick [14], "the media have taken the place of sentinels and lookouts" (p. 31) as they routinely deploy their resources to survey the environment and inform people about happenings. Timely reporting of issues and events in society enables individuals to live meaningfully and make daily vital decisions. Dominick [14], identified two types of surveillance namely: beware and instrumental surveillance. Beware surveillance entails dissemination of news and information about impending threats or dangers to life and society in the areas of economy (such as inflation, recession or depression); environment (unfavourable weather conditions such as tornados, hurricanes, flood); conflicts (such as military invasion, wars, sectarian crises); and health (prevalence of diseases, risks, disease prevention and cure). Instrumental surveillance involves the dissemination of information that is useful for everyday living. Such information includes various motivational contents, investment ideas, career development tips, family life ideas, and fashion trends. Dissemination of news and information about the prevalence and risks of, as well as the need for screening for early diagnosis is thus within the purview of the beware surveillance function of the mass media.

The performance of this function in the society rests largely on journalists as key stakeholders in the crusade. The level of awareness of media professionals about Prostate cancer and their attitude towards the disease is of interest in this study to examine the extent to which they have self-applied the knowledge about the disease and developed the right attitude towards screening for it as an early preventive or diagnostic measure. Notwithstanding the mass media's role in disseminating information and generating the right attitude about Prostate cancer, awareness of, and attitude towards Prostate cancer screening among male journalists in Lagos State, Nigeria is perhaps low.

## Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a structured questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The instrument was structured to elicit data on respondents' demography, as well as their awareness of, and attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. The universe of the study comprised 1,300 registered members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Lagos state chapter. The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), founded in 1955 is the professional and labour organization that comprises all journalists in Nigeria. It has chapters in all the thirty-six states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT) Abuja. Of particular focus were registered male journalists of 40 years and above because Prostate cancer is common among male adults of this age group. The study adopted the purposive sampling technique to select a total of 192 male members of the NUJ who were in the above age bracket.

Before data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of 30 male adult journalists in Abeokuta. Abeokuta is the capital of Ogun state, the closest state to Lagos state. Lagos is home to about 30% of thriving media houses in Nigeria, and has had a rub-off effect on media activities in Ogun state. Abeokuta was equally where the first newspaper in Nigeria was founded in 1859.

A reliability check was conducted on the filled copies of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.903 was obtained. Data collection was done solely by the researchers, who contacted the respondents on the phone, visited them in their offices and beats to administer the instrument. All the copies of the questionnaire were returned and were checked for completeness. Data from the questionnaire were imputed into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS version 23. Categorical variables were presented as frequencies (n) and percentages (%). Linear and multiple regression test analyses were used to examine the influence of the independent variable(s) on the dependent variable. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance or p-value.

## Results

The analysis begins with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by their level of awareness, means of communication through which they were aware, frequency of Prostate cancer screening and the last screening conducted. These analyses were done using frequency distribution tables and simple percentages. The hypotheses of the study were tested by regression analysis.

The study respondents cut across print, broadcast and social media. The result reveals that respondents' educational status ranged from National Diploma (ND) to Ph.D., which qualified them for the study as educated people. However, majority of the respondents (n=152, 79.2%) were Higher National Diploma (HND)/Bachelor of Science (BSc) certificate holders, while the minority (n=3, 1.6%) were Ph.D. holders. Also, majority of the respondents were between the ages of 40 years and 49 years (n=173, 74.5%); about one-fourth (n=48) were in their 50s, while only one was in his 60s. This reveals that the study respondents were mostly in their 40s, an age bracket most suitable for early screening for prevention and effective management of Prostate cancer. In addition, the large majority of the respondents were married (n=176, 91.7%). With respect to their categories of media employment, 56 percent (n=108) worked with T.V. stations, 22.4 percent worked with newspapers (n=43), 3.1 percent (n=6) were social media journalists, while 1.6 percent worked with magazines. Data show that majority of the respondents (n=162, 84.4%) claimed that they had no family history of Prostate cancer while about 15.6 percent (n=30) did not know their Prostate cancer family history.

Findings further show that majority of the respondents were aware of Prostate cancer screening to some extent (n=118, 61.5%), 18.2 percent (n=35) were aware to a great extent, while 17.7 percent (n=34) were aware to a very great extent (17.7%). Although it is difficult to imagine that some

journalists could be unaware of Prostate cancer screening yet, five, representing 2.6 percent were found to be unaware of the screening. Generally, 97.4 percent of male journalists were aware of Prostate cancer screening.

From the report, male journalists in Lagos State were aware of Prostate cancer through diverse means of communication such television (n=108, 56.3%), newspaper (n=43, 22.4%), radio (n=32, 16.7%), social media (n=6, 3.1%) and magazine (n=3, 1.6). This suggests that male journalists in Lagos State were aware of Prostate cancer mostly through television. This may be directly connected with the number of participants from television stations. Nevertheless, newspaper and radio were also high, suggesting that the traditional media are still at the forefront of the campaign for Prostate cancer screening in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Report shows that majority (n=157, 81.8%) of male journalists had never done Prostate cancer screening; however, 0.5 percent (n=1) did it very often, 11.5 percent (n=22) did it often. This suggests that male journalists in Lagos State had a poor attitude towards frequent Prostate cancer screening.

The results further show that the majority (n=162, 84.4%) of male journalists had never had Prostate cancer screening;

however, 6.8 percent (n=13) had it a year ago, 5.7 percent (n=11) had it two years ago, 2.6 percent (n=5) did it three years ago; while 0.5 percent (n=1) did it four years ago. This implies that there were 8.8 percent male media workers in Lagos who had their last Prostate cancer screening more than one year ago compared with those who had it one year ago (6.8%). This also shows a negative attitude to Prostate cancer screening among male journalists in Lagos state, Nigeria.

## Test of Hypotheses

The pre-set level of significance for this study was 0.05. The alternate hypotheses assume that there is a significant influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. If the P-value (that is, the significance or the probability value) exceeds the pre-set level of significance (that is  $p > 0.05$ ), the alternate hypothesis will be rejected; but if the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), then the alternate hypothesis will be accepted.

H1: There is a significant influence of demography on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening.

**Table 1:** Multiple linear regression testing significant influence of demography on attitude towards prostate cancer screening.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	11.122	1.058		10.508	0.000
Educational qualification	-1.204	0.274	-0.324	-4.390	0.000
Age of respondent	0.320	0.302	0.078	1.061	0.290
Marital status of respondent	-0.422	0.470	-0.063	-0.899	0.370
What medium do you work with?	-0.008	0.158	-0.003	-0.049	0.961

Dependent Variable: Attitude Towards Prostate Cancer Screening

The combined demography variables had a significant influence on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening ( $F(5,191)=16.936, p<0.05$ ). This implies that participants' demography in terms of educational qualification, age, marital status and media of employment jointly significantly influenced male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. Furthermore, the analysis of the relative perspective in **Table 1** shows that each of the demographic indicators had no significant influence on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening for example age ( $\beta=0.320, t=1.061, p>0.05$ ); Marital status ( $\beta=-0.422, t=-0.899, p>0.05$ ); and media of employment ( $\beta=-0.008, t=-0.049, p>0.05$ ). Only educational status with ( $p<0.05$ ) had a significant influence on the attitude towards Prostate cancer screening among the respondents. Therefore, the hypothesis that journalists' demography (educational

status) significantly influences attitude towards Prostate cancer screening was accepted. It is, however, interesting that marital status did not influence positive attitude towards Prostate cancer screening, as the majority of the respondents were married. It was expected that being married, participants should be concerned with their Prostate cancer status, nonetheless, this result has proved otherwise. Age and media of participants' employment did not make any significant influence on their attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. Hence, the hypothesis that male journalists' age, marital status and their different media of employment significantly influenced attitude towards Prostate screening cancer was rejected.

H2: There is a significant influence of awareness of Prostate cancer on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening.

**Table 2:** Multiple linear regression testing significant influence of awareness on attitude towards prostate cancer screening.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	8.018	0.548		14.624	0.000
	To what extent are you aware of Prostate cancer screening?	-0.059	0.166	-0.026	-0.353	0.725
	By what means of communication are you aware of Prostate cancer screening?	0.122	0.129	0.069	0.946	0.345

Dependent Variable: Attitude Towards Prostate Cancer Screening

**Table 2** shows that awareness of Prostate cancer had no significant influence on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. ( $\beta = -0.059$ ,  $t = 0.725$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This implies that although the level of awareness of Prostate cancer screening among male journalists spread across print, broadcast, and social media, this did not translate into a positive attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. Therefore, policy makers and strategists working towards improving male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening should be more deliberate at increasing the knowledge of Prostate cancer among this group in order to ensure a positive attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. Consequently, the hypothesis that awareness of Prostate cancer significantly influences male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening was rejected. It is expected that a positive and favourable attitude among male journalists would likely improve their frequency of Prostate cancer screening.

## Discussion

The study revealed that majority of the respondents, regardless of their demographic characteristics (age, educational qualification, and marital status) did not have a positive disposition towards Prostate cancer screening. In spite of the high level of awareness, there was still a negative attitudinal disposition of the respondents towards Prostate cancer screening. This shows that male journalists in the study were aware of Prostate cancer as a health condition and its possible implications for male adults. Similar high level of awareness was found among male university students in Ghana [16], and among older men in Oyo state, Nigeria [17]. No doubt, journalists are major players in the health crusade, through the dissemination of information to the society about Prostate cancer as a health condition. The role of the media in this regard underscores the fundamental function of the mass media as posited by Nwanne [12] and Odorume [13] that the Nigerian media have been instrumental in designing, championing and supporting campaigns of health in the areas of malaria, immunization, reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, Ebola, Prostate cancer prevention and healthy living practices.

With television as the main means of awareness creation among the respondents, followed by newspaper and radio, results of this study indicated that the mainstream media were very relevant in the campaign against Prostate cancer. This is at variance with the conclusion of Ajilore, et al. [18], that school teachers and counsellors, but not the media, were the primary sources of information about health-related news (sickle cell). This variance could be associated with the fact that Prostate cancer is a health condition involving only male adults while sickle cell involves children and youth predominantly.

On the influence of demography on attitude towards Prostate cancer screening, the study established that aside from educational status, other demographic variables had no significant influence on male journalists' attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. Normally, it should be expected that as media workers who are custodians of media information, details of Prostate cancer should be common knowledge to journalists and this should lead to a positive attitude towards screening. However, the result of this study reveals that the knowledge of Prostate cancer among male journalists did not reflect on their attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. It could be adduced that the work routine of journalists, which requires them to work under very strict deadlines may be responsible for their casual attitude towards their health. Media owners and management could help in this regard by encouraging their staff to go for periodic medical check-ups. The need for this is accentuated by the position of the World Health Organisation (2013) that early diagnosis of cancer enhances treatment success.

## Conclusion

Findings from this study have established that there was a high level of awareness of Prostate cancer among male journalists in Lagos state, Nigeria. However, this did not translate to a positive attitude towards Prostate cancer screening. Hence the saying "physician heal thyself" is affirmed in this study, as male journalists in Lagos, who are key players in disseminating health-related information, are not translating their awareness to attitudinal change by

compliance to screening. The situation theoretically results in what Leon Festinger referred to as cognitive dissonance, a theory he propounded in 1957 to explain the disharmony that occurs when someone's beliefs are at variance with their behaviour. Cognitive dissonance is the conflict that arises between prior and suggested attitudes, beliefs or actions about issues based on information received and processed about such issues. The conflict leads to discomfort as a result of imbalance, leading to the possibility of an alteration in any of the individual's attitudes, beliefs or actions in order to reduce the discomfort and restore balance [19]. Balance is restored once inconsistency is recognized, through possible increased awareness or knowledge about the health condition, which could lead to a change in attitudes and/or actions, like going for screening. However, if the inconsistencies are not resolved due to low awareness or knowledge about the health condition among journalists, their beliefs and attitudes about Prostate cancer screening would remain unchanged.

Due to the critical importance of early diagnosis of Prostate cancer through screening, it is recommended that the government, working with other stakeholders should make Prostate cancer screening mandatory, free and biennial. This, it is hoped would translate the awareness among male journalists to attitude change, such as doing screening. Results from screening tests should be part of the required documentation for staff evaluation and assessment. Stringent as this policy may seem, a proper change in attitude resulting from education would enable an appreciation of its value as fewer lives are lost to the disease. Public health communicators should also focus on journalists for improved enlightenment programmes on Prostate cancer screening in media organizations.

In spite of the findings of this study, the authors think that employing a mixed methods research design could provide deeper understandings of the underlying factors that could explain the apathy of male journalists to Prostate cancer screening.

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