



Applicant Information

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Abstract Details

Title:

From Symptoms to Support: Women’s Journeys with Female Genital Schistosomiasis in Nigeria

Category:

Communicable diseases (Malaria, TB, HIV, NTD)

Authors:

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Objectives:

Female genital schistosomiasis is a complication from schistosomiasis affecting women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa. The study aimed to understand the experiences and health seeking behavior of women with FGS symptoms and their sources of support.

Method:

A cross-sectional study using mixed methods (survey and interviews) with women and girls of reproductive age in two states of Nigeria.

Results:

Participants reported many symptoms associated with FGS: vaginal itching, offensive and abnormal vaginal discharge. Many women described feeling ashamed to discuss symptoms with others, delaying healthcare seeking. The primary sources of support for women with FGS were family members (parents and spouse), and health workers. Few women sought care from healthcare providers, while others relied on herbal remedies or self-medication. Healthcare decision-making was influenced by several factors, including cultural beliefs, economic constraints, and perceived severity of symptoms. Many women expressed lack of knowledge about FGS and treatment, hindering their ability to make informed decisions. Additionally, mental health issues around distressing thoughts and stigma associated with FGS coupled with the fear of discrimination.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the challenges and care seeking behaviors of women with FGS in accessing and utilizing healthcare services. Increasing awareness about the disease to address stigma surrounding FGS and improving access to quality healthcare are essential steps in improving the health and well-being of women affected by this condition.

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