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INFLUENCE OF LIBRARIANS AND MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS COLLABORATION ON MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION TO YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

Harithat Oyiza JIBRIL
Research Assistant, Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger State.

OSERADA Wilson (CLN)
University Libraries, Nasarawa State University, Keffi.

Onivehu Abdulraheem KAREEM (CLN)
Research Assistant, Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger State

Abstract
The study was on Influence of librarians and mental health practitioners collaboration on mental health literacy information dissemination to youth in rural areas, North Central Nigerian. Survey research design method was adopted for the study. The total population of the youths under study was 108,737. The sample size of the youth's population was 383 drawn from a sample size table for determining the sample size of a population. Purposive method of sampling was employed to sample six (6) participants from the public libraries and public health centers under study. Questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection. 383 copies of questionnaire administered, 352 copies were filled, returned and used for the analysis. Descriptive statistical tools involving frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The findings from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between information dissemination, collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners and mental health literacy. The study recommended among others that the ministries of information and ministries of health in the North-central states should form a consortium that facilitates and oversees collaboration between public librarians and mental health practitioners for a sustainable boost to the mental health literacy of the rural youths.
Keywords: Information Dissemination, Librarian, Health Practitioners, Mental Health Literacy Information

Background to the Study

Over the years, there has been significant efforts made by government, health organization and practitioners as well as communities to manage physical health diseases such as polio, measles, meningitis, chicken pox, malaria, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, monkeypox and very recently, Coronavirus, whereas awareness level and education of the public on mental health diseases seems to be quite low in comparison to physical diseases. Mental health literacy though has varying definitions but essentially involves the access, communication, comprehension and evaluation of information about mental health which leads to the improvement, maintenance and promotion of mental health.

Originally mental health literacy (MHL) was conceptualized as knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders. In Canada, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (2017) highlighted the health promotion aspects of mental health literacy (MHL) as the range of cognitive and social skills and capacities that support mental health promotion and later made.

In a report, World Health Organization, (WHO) (2016) stressed the role of mental health literacy as being a stronger predictor of mental health than education, employment status, income as well as ethnic/racial group. Suleiman (2017) opined that it is necessary to undertake the widespread education of the Nigerian youths on the recognition of mental health disorders as a disease and the need for societal and family support and the avoidance of stigmatization of people suffering from mental health disorders.

Primary Health Centres (PHC) are health care centres that offer professional medical care for individuals based on a locality or community before shifting them to more advanced hospital-based care like the general specialist and super specialist (Dorsett, 2014). In fact, primary health care centres form the vital aspect of a country's health system while immensely assisting in the socio-economic development of the community with a lot to do and offer on mental health literacy of the youth and its inhabitants.

Youth, according to Noel (2014) are generally regarded as those members of the society who are young between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States which may vary with various scholarly examinations of Mental Health Literacy (MHL) have typically found the general public including the youths of developing countries, which Nigeria is inclusive; to have a poorer understanding of mental health which has impeded them seeking and getting treatment when compared to the cases in developed countries (Goldney, Fisher, Dal Grande, & Taylor, 2011).

In Nigeria today, attitude towards mental illness is gravely colored with prejudice and misconceptions. It is believed that an estimated 20% – 30% of the population suffer from mental illnesses, regrettably, the level of awareness on mental health issues amongst the Nigerian youths is considerably dismal (Salau, 2018). The World Health Organization (2018) in commemoration of World Mental Health Day, which was focused on mental health issues confronting youths and young adults in our ever-changing world today stated that adolescence and the early years of adulthood are a time of life when many changes occur.

Mental health information dissemination is therefore considered very crucial to achieving mental health literacy because the feeling of coherence is developed through various learning processes. The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2016) describes several key strategies for promoting health literacy which are; improve the usability of health information and health services; build knowledge to improve health decision making, and advocate for health. Remove the word "health" from these strategies and it becomes apparent that these are all activities practiced by librarians on a daily basis. Barr-Walker (2017) finds that as far back as 2001, public and academic librarians have been actively collaborating to promote health literacy among a wide variety of populations, including older adults, underinsured people, immigrants, inmates, health professionals and students.

The magnitude of mental disorders is a growing public health concern. Amidst this matter of great concern, lack of awareness and stigma are the major barriers between persons with mental illness and opportunities to recover. Nigeria is currently witnessing an increased rate of suicidal attempts and actions, with many members of the public still not able to recognize specific disorders or different types of psychological distress. This therefore calls for a need to study ways through which librarians, being information professionals, can step in to enhance mental health literacy which is a known barrier to mental health sustenance so as to gain access to, understand and use information in ways that promote and maintain good mental health.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past few decades, much attention has been given to health literacy by health organizations, practitioners, policy makers and health information professionals. The World Health Organization also endorsed mental health as a universal human right and a fundamental goal for health care systems of all countries, conceptualizes optimal actions for improved service provision as establishing national policies, programs, and legislation on mental health, providing services for mental disorders in primary care, ensuring accessibility to essential psychotropic medication, developing human resources, promoting public education and involving other sectors and promoting and supporting relevant research (WHO, 2016).

However, in spite of the rising research on the mental health literacy of adults, there is yet to be a parallel interest in how to ensure a sustainable mental health literacy of youths in rural areas of Nigeria. Some of the policies on mental health and development in Nigeria such as the Mental Health Policy formulated in 1991, National Adolescent Health Policy (NAHP), and National Youth Policy (NYP) do not earnestly address the issues of mental health literacy among adolescents and young persons. Several researches conducted in Nigeria have recorded mental health literacy to be very low as individuals with mental and behavioral disorders are predominantly from the middle and low-income countries and more specifically, youths in the rural areas of those countries where mental health literacy has remained a neglected matter (Salau, 2018).

This study, therefore, seeks to assess information dissemination and collaboration of librarians with health practitioners for sustainable mental health literacy among youths in rural areas of North-central, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess information dissemination and collaboration of librarians with health practitioners for sustainable mental health literacy among youths in rural areas of North-central, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. find out the level of collaboration between the librarians and mental health practitioners in disseminating mental health information to the youths in North-central, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the influence of collaboration of the librarians and mental health practitioners on the mental health literacy of youths in rural areas of North-central, Nigeria.

3. identify factors affecting sustainable mental health literacy amongst youths in the rural areas of North-central, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Mental Health and Mental Health Literacy

The term was introduced by Jorm et al, in 1997. Health literacy refers to how well individuals can understand basic health information in order to make informed choices about their health care (Suleiman, 2017). Having low literacy may have a negative effect on health and health care given the complexity of health care systems in the United States (US) (Alonso et al, 2017). Mental health literacy also includes: understanding how to prevent mental disorders, recognizing symptoms of a developing mental disorder, knowing about help-seeking interventions and self-help strategies, and mental health first aid skills to help others experiencing a mental health crisis (Jorm, 2015).

Mental Health Literacy consists of the following six components: (1) the ability to recognize specific disorders or different types of psychological distress; (2) knowledge and beliefs about risk factors and causes; (3) knowledge and beliefs about self-help interventions; (4) knowledge and beliefs about professional help available; (5) attitudes which facilitate recognition and appropriate help-seeking and (6) knowledge of how to seek mental health information (Jorm, 2015).

Current literature reports that people in the western countries tend to have mental health notions that are similar to mental health practitioners' perspectives, compared to people in non-western countries (Furnham and Igboaka, 2017). With increasing attention to research and availability of mental health education and training resources, recent studies suggested that awareness has been improved, particularly about depression. Yet, people are not familiar with many other mental disorders and lower-level mental health literacy is reported amongst people in developing countries (Furnham and Swami, 2018). Studies have revealed that some socio-demographic factors are associated with gender, age, education, culture, region, and experiences of mental disorders or treatment. People with higher educational level and people living in developed countries or urban area tend to show a higher level of mental health literacy that aligns with professional perspectives than their counterparts with lower educational level (Dias, Campos, Almeida, & Palha, 2018). People with a higher level of mental health awareness are likely to have positive attitudes toward seeking professional help, more confidence in helping others with mental health issues, and less stigmatizing beliefs about and attitudes toward mental health issues (White and Casey, 2017; Kutcher, Wei and Coniglio, 2016).

Mental Health Literacy in Rural Areas

There has been substantial agreement on the rural priority status of mental health relative to all other functional areas. Although ranked in 12th place among most often identified priorities by local public health officials, it ranked among the top five most frequently selected priorities among state health leaders, and leaders of rural community health centres and clinics and rural hospitals.

According to an exploratory study conducted by Wickstead and Furnham (2017), mental health and mental disorders were identified as the fourth highest ranking rural

health concern among 28 functional areas identified. In the study, 37 percent of the state and local rural health leaders in their responses, selected mental health and mental disorder as one of their top rural health priorities, after access, oral health, and diabetes. Compared to other chronic diseases, mental disorders strike earlier, often in the period extending from the teens to the mid-twenties.

The Role of Librarians in Advancing Health Literacy Information

Libraries do not only provide access to high-quality health and wellness information but enable access to this information by offering Internet access, digital literacy training and other sustained forms of support. Health literacy no doubt is fundamental to full participation in managing personal and family health and wellness. As noted by the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM), health literacy is complex and includes aspects of traditional literacy measures, numeracy skills, and cultural competency.

Libraries offer guidance to community members with diverse needs related to learning about health and healthcare, nutrition, and access to government and an array of healthcare support programs and services. They also provide and enhance access to health sciences for professionals seeking research regarding medical developments and clinical trials. Libraries support health literacy as they respond to specific health-related inquiries, as well as by developing collections that are responsive to health consumer concerns (De Bruyn, 2015).

The case studies and survey findings of Stringer (2020) suggest that involvement in health and well-being service delivery also brings benefits for the library sector helping staff to hone existing skills both through the provision of designated training from partners relating to areas such as mental health awareness, health information provision and health and well-being referral and signposting and by developing interest and motivation through direct involvement in activity.

Librarians and Mental Health Practitioners – The Need for Collaboration

Traditionally, patient education resources consisted mainly of printed leaflets handed out by physicians during patient consultations (Washburn, 2010). At present, many patients take a more proactive role in seeking out health information from the wealth of resources available online. Within the United States (U.S.), for example, recent survey findings from the Pew Internet and American Life Project revealed that 59% of all adults had looked for health information on the Internet within the previous year (Fox & Duggan, 2013). Patient education has become an increasingly central focus of primary healthcare in recent years, in the Sultanate of Oman (Jabr and Al-Harrasi, 2015) as well as in other developing and developed countries (Washburn, 2010; Behar-Horenstein et al, 2011).

In 2017, the Public Library Association (PLA) initiated a partnership with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) to increase public library staff knowledge and skills related to consumer health information, health reference, health literacy, and health programming (Salau, 2018). This national work is exposing thousands of public librarians to educational programs such as Stand Up for Health and the

opportunity to become a designated health information specialist. In Nigeria, Aramide (2020) concluded that the impact of bibliotherapy on mental health of the young ones is worthy of note. This supports the submission of Adeyeye and Oyewusi (2017) who found the great use of clinical bibliotherapy in the rehabilitation process of children and adolescents in correctional homes in Lagos, Nigeria.

The library skills and roles combined with regular interaction with community members position libraries to serve as powerful collaborators in strategizing and delivering local health and wellness programs. In Wisconsin, according to the director of the Crandon Public Library is a member of the Forest County Community Coalition, which is made up of stakeholders from a range of community organizations that work together to support a healthy county. Participation in this coalition helps keep the library and library resources front and centre in health-related planning (IFLA, 2017).

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey research design. A research design is a strategy for answering your research question using empirical data (McCombes, 2021). It is most suitable because it is a suitable and efficient way of studying large population of different groups. Population of the Study The population size for this study was 108,737. Librarians in public libraries, mental health practitioners in public health centres and youths in rural areas proposed for the study in North-central Zone, Nigeria. The population of the librarians in the public libraries was 63, the population of health practitioners was 6 and the population of the youths in the rural areas was estimated to be 108,674 and thus, resulting to a total population of 108,737 for the study. The sample size of the youth's population was three hundred and eighty-three (383) drawn from Gill Gill, Johnson, & Clark (2010) sample size table for determining the sample size of a population.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the level of collaboration between the librarians and mental health practitioners in disseminating mental health information to the youths in North-central, Nigeria?

Table 4.1 N=6

S/N	Statement	VLL	LL	HL	VHL	FX	X	SD	Decision
		1	2	3	4				
1.	They jointly give youths mental health talks	2	3	1	0	10	1.83	0.75	Low
2.	Provision of information on health-related laws and regulations to the youths	1	4	1	0	12	2.00	0.63	Low
3.	Provision of information on health literacy to the youths	0	3	2	1	16	2.67	0.82	High
4.	Provision of information on safety to the youths	0	3	3	0	15	2.50	0.55	High
5.	Provision of information on health maintenance to the youths	0	3	2	1	16	2.67	0.82	High
6.	Provision of information on overall healthcare costs to the youths	1	5	0	0	10	1.83	0.41	Low
7.	Provision of access to quality, organized and understandable health information to the youths	0	2	3	1	16	2.83	0.75	High
							2.33	**0.67**	

Key: VL = Very Low, L = Low, H = High, VH = Very High, FX= Frequency of Mean, X= Mean

The result in Table 4.1 shows that the level of collaboration between the librarians and mental health practitioners in disseminating mental health information to the youths in North-central, Nigeria is low, as the responses from the respondents have an overall mean score $(x)^{-}$ lesser than the benchmark score (2.50). The least three items are; they jointly give youths mental health talks with (x^{-}= 1.83; FX = 10); provision of information on overall healthcare costs to the youths (x^{-}=1.83; FX = 10); provision of information on health-related laws and regulations to the youths with (x^{-}=2.00; FX = 12).

Research Question 2: What is the influence of collaboration of the librarians with mental health practitioners on dissemination of mental health literacy information of youths in rural areas of North-central, Nigeria?

Table 4.2

N=352

S/N	Statement	SD 1	D 2	A 3	SD 4	FX	X	SD	Decision
1.	Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has helped me to quit smoking	112	122	71	47	756	2.15	1.02	Disagreed
2.	Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has helped me to stop stigmatizing people with disorders	79	109	98	66	855	2.43	1.04	Disagreed
3.	Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has equipped me with appropriate help seeking knowledge	116	114	72	50	760	2.16	1.04	Disagreed
4.	Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has helped me recognize possible mental disorder symptoms	142	125	55	30	675	1.92	0.95	Disagreed
5.	Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has improved my overall knowledge of the importance of mental stability	86	89	95	82	876	2.49	1.09	Disagreed
6.	Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has helped me with the right approaches towards helping mental health patients	98	101	88	65	823	2.34	1.07	Disagreed
							2.25	**1.04**	

Key: SD = Strongly Disagreed, D = Disagreed, A = Agreed, SA= Strongly Agreed, FX= Frequency of Mean, X= Mean

The result in Table 4.2 shows that youths in the rural areas of North-central Nigeria disagreed that collaboration of the librarians with mental health practitioners has an influence on their mental health literacy, as the responses from the respondents have an overall mean score $(x)^{-}$lesser than the benchmark score (2.50). Although all but one of the items had disagreed, the least three items are; collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has helped me recognised possible mental disorder symptoms with (x^{-}= 1.92; FX = 675); collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has helped me to quit smoking with (x^{-}= 2.15; FX = 756); collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners has equipped me with appropriate help seeking knowledge with (x^{-}= 2.16; FX = 760).

Research Question 3: What are the factors affecting sustainable mental health literacy amongst youths in the rural areas of North-central, Nigeria?

Table 4.3

		N=352							
S/N	**Statement**	**SD**	**D**	**A**	**SA**	**FX**	**X**	**SD**	**Decision**
		1	2	3	4				
1.	There is no adequate information on drug abuse	67	83	119	83	922	2.62	1.05	Agreed
2.	There is more of superstitious beliefs in the society	48	77	112	115	999	2.84	1.03	Agreed
3.	Lack of fund to afford adequate mental healthcare	42	65	132	113	1020	2.90	0.98	Agreed
4.	Inability to recognize mental disorder symptoms	58	80	110	104	964	2.74	1.05	Agreed
5.	Lack of mental health care institutions	25	63	120	144	1063	3.09	0.93	Agreed
6.	Poor information dissemination services of the library	38	64	129	121	1038	2.95	0.97	Agreed
							2.85	**1.00**	

Key: SD = Strongly Disagreed, D =Disagreed, A = Agreed, SA = Strongly Agreed, FX= Frequency of Mean, X= Mean

The result in Table 4.3 affirms that the listed factors affect sustainable mental health literacy amongst youths, as the responses from the respondents had an average score $(x)^{-}$greater than or equal to the benchmark score (2.50). Although all the items were agreed upon, the top three items are; lack of mental health care institutions with (x^{-}= 3.09; FX= 1063); poor information dissemination services of the library with (x^{-}= 2.95; FX = 1038); lack of fund to afford adequate mental healthcare with (x^{-}= 2.90; FX = 1020).

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question One: What is the level of collaboration between the librarians and mental health practitioners in disseminating mental health information to the youths in North-central, Nigeria?

From the findings of research question one, it was revealed that the level of collaboration between the librarians and mental health practitioners in disseminating mental health information to the youths in North-central, Nigeria is low. This is captured in Table 4.1. This could be as a result of non-existing structure and understanding to foster collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners. This is in line with Macdonald (2015) suggestion which stated that for collaborative partnerships, there is need for a collaborative training program, orientation and research support.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of collaboration of the librarians and mental health practitioners on the mental health literacy of youths in rural areas of North-central, Nigeria?

Findings from the research question two revealed that the respondents with overall mean value of 2.25 disagreed that collaboration of the librarians and mental health practitioners has a significant influence on their mental health literacy. This could be due to lack of adequate collaboration between the librarians and the mental health practitioners. Macdonald (2015) research highlights stated that the success of librarians in disseminating medical information is dependent on the partnerships that have been forged between the librarians and health care professionals in various hospital departments.

Research Question Three: What are the factors affecting sustainable mental health literacy amongst youths in the rural areas of North-central, Nigeria?

Findings from research question three revealed that each of the items listed; inadequate information, superstitious beliefs, lack of fund, inability to recognize mental disorder symptoms, lack of adequate mental care institutions and poor information dissemination services by the public libraries were identified to be problems affecting sustainable mental health literacy amongst youths in the rural areas of North-central, Nigeria. This could be due to low literacy rates, scanty mental healthcare centers, tales of old, and poverty.

Conclusion

The conclusion, based on the findings of the study is that mental health literacy is abysmally low amongst youths in the rural North-central Nigeria. It was also revealed that the role of public librarians, in collaboration with mental health practitioners for effective dissemination of mental health information is very crucial to the mental health literacy of the rural youths but unfortunately, non-existent and at best, seldom made available. The enormous possible impact of information dissemination and the collaboration of librarians with mental health practitioners was also reinforced by the

result of the study's hypotheses. The study further revealed that Focus Group Discussion as an instrument of data collection is more effective when studying a population of predominantly, illiterates or basic schooled people.

Recommendations

1. Mental health information to the rural youths in North-central Nigeria should be given urgent attention by all the stakeholders; information professionals, mental health practitioners, the government and non-governmental bodies.
2. There should be a follow-up procedure by librarians and mental health professionals to ascertain that a mental health knowledge gap was actually bridged after every outreach or any information service directed at creating mental health awareness in rural areas.
3. The ministries of information and of health in the North-central states should form a consortium that facilitates and oversees collaboration between public librarians and mental health practitioners for the improvement of the mental health literacy of the rural youths.

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