



Research Paper

Knowledge about Female Condom and Usage among Nigeria Female Youths: Overcoming Reoccurring Issues

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Abstract

The female condom is a contraceptive device that is effective and useful like the male condom in the protection against diseases that can be contacted through sexual intimacy. The contraceptive is also meant to safeguard the female folk against unwanted pregnancy when carefully used and to give them control over their sex life. Unfortunately, the female condom has not received enough attention, especially among female youths who are vulnerable to sexual activities. Many of them have little or no knowledge about the availability and usage of condoms. It has led some of them to be casualties of sexually transmitted diseases and infections, and undesired pregnancy. This article, therefore, aims to review the knowledge and usage of female condoms among female youths, the issues surrounding usage, and the overcoming ways that can serve as a solution to the reoccurring issues against knowledge and usage of the device among young female folks. The paper is a theoretical review that made use of relevant works, and studies carried out on the subject. It was revealed in the study that knowledge and usage of female condoms are low among female youths which have accounted for the increase in sexually related diseases and infections among them. The article believes that giving quality education about contraceptives, promoting and using local marketing, ensuring availability of the device, and communicating and passing of information, as well as, giving adequate teachings by clinicians will portray practical prospects in achieving the purpose of the condom among female youths.

Keywords: Female condoms, female youths and contraceptives, Sexual transmitted diseases.

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I. Introduction and Statement of Problem

Society has been frequently challenged by seeking solutions to many medical discoveries that medically address human fitness and healthy living among people. It is no gainsaying to admit that a healthy society can only create a wealthy society. And a healthy, wealthy society can best be described as healthy, better-living people who are medically sound to carry out any social activity. Contrary to this opinion is the resultant effect on the socio-economic development of the society. In most cases, health issues have been a major source of concern for these aspirations.

There have been incidence discovery cases of infections and diseases over the decades which have claimed many lives. The loss of lives led to the invention and discovery of antidotes to curtail the further spread of infections and diseases as well as reduce mortality rates among people. In the 15th century, England witnessed a syphilis pandemic outbreak (khan et al, 2013, Abari et al, 2020) which spread among the people as a result of sexual contact. In a bid to curtail the further spread of diseases and other related infections, a condom contraceptive device was invented and produced for people to use. The device was meant to protect people against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and venereal diseases (khan et al, 2013) and prevent unwanted pregnancies (Kallner & Danielsson, 2016) owing to unprotected sex. Further improvement in the production of the device evolved in the 1980s to reduce the rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

However, more attention has been centered on male condom usage and utilization than on female condoms; which were invented in 1990 and generally accepted for use in 1993 by the food and drug administration (FDA). A female condom, likewise the male condom, is meant to be worn and serve as a barrier to male ejaculated semen or other body fluids during sexual activity between the partners. Female condom (FC) contraceptives, despite the approval in 1993 (Abari et al, 2020), have not received enough publicity in society like the male condom. It has resulted in a low rate of acceptability and usage among female youths and women. There have been clarion calls in the beginning to that effect that (Jannamike, 2021), female folk needed to

protect themselves against unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancy, STIs, and STDs as well as for them to gain control over their sexual life during any sexual activity with their partner.

The clarion calls were necessitated as a result of alarming records of cases of infections and diseases transmitted sexually among women and female youths. The reason for the high record of cases has been associated with unprotected sex and a decline in the use of female condoms. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO), in an updated July report 2021 described that 37.7million people were living with HIV in 2020 with 1.5 million people acquiring HIV and 680,000 people have died as a result of HIV-related causes in 2020 as well. WHO further presented that 36.0 million adults with age 15 years and above were living with HIV; with 19.3 million and 16.7 million constituted women and men of 15 years and above respectively, in 2020. Africa, America, South East Asia, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, and West Pacific had a record of people living with HIV 25.4 million, 3.7 million, 3.7 million, 2.6 million, 420,000, and 1.9 million respectively. Also, 35 % of the population constituted an infected population who did not use any protection device, 20% were infected clients of sex workers and sex partners, and 9 percent constituted people who injected themselves with drugs. Unfortunately, women and female youths constituted people with the most infected population.

Youths are believed to be the future hope generation of any society because of their vigor, activeness, and energetic prowess to engage in many socio-economic activities for the growth and development of society. Female youths are not exempted from this group of people. In Nigeria, incidence cases of STIs (Oluwole et al, 2020), unprotected sex, and unwanted pregnancy are still noticeable despite the claim of its effectiveness. In many various studies carried out to determine the knowledge, usage, and acceptability of female condoms among Nigerian youths, it was noticed that their level of compliance, acceptability, and usage was low(Uchendu et al, 2019). It has therefore become a reoccurring social issue among female youths that require more consideration and appropriate recommendation that will stand the test of time and period. This paper, therefore, aims to theoretically review and examine the reoccurring issues and factors surrounding the non-usage, and low knowledge about female condoms among Nigerian female youths in society, and positive ways to overcome the issues.

II. Theoretical framework

Protection Motivation Theory

Protection motivation theory (PMT) is employed for this article to explain the necessity of seeking protection in health-related issues. Protection motivation theory as one of the health issues related theories propounded that people tend to respond to situations that may result in negative effects by taking necessary precautionary measures to protect themselves.

Protection motivation theory was a built-up theory found in the works of Rogers R. W in 1975 (Westcott et al, 2017; Ezati Rad et al, 2021). It was an initiated theory by Richard Lazarus. In Richard's work, he studied how people interpret and react to situations that are stressful by considering the following: stress, appraisal, and coping cognitive appraisal processes. It was on that assumption that Rogers expanded his works to explain that health-wise, people take to protect themselves out of fear created by illnesses or diseases, when they understand that there are consequences that may endanger their lives, by not taking precautionary measures. Roger proposed that protection motivation theory was guided by two assumptions: threat appraisal and coping appraisal.

According to Rogers, threat appraisal was created as a result of the severity of the situation at hand which enables a person to decide to protect himself or herself against the perceived issue. He adds that threat appraisal is created as a result of the severity of the situation at hand which gives a person a desire for protection for himself or herself against the perceived issue. People desire good health, and will always want to access any proposed disease or illness, and what can be done to approach it. On coping appraisal, he added that it could be a perceived response efficacy or self-efficacy. For them to cope with the perceived threat, they remove the threat by carrying out the recommended action.

The essence of the theory in this article is that it helps to explain people's response to fear appeals by applying for or taking precautionary measures. Protection and guidance are sought by people against the consequences that may result from the situation already created by the fear appeals. Sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and unprotected sex are indelible issues in recent years as a result of the consequences they are attached to. Information about these issues has been a threat to the survival of human being such that they signal body illnesses, diseases, poverty, depression, and even death in some extreme cases. Previous medical experiences have shown that any negligence shown in addressing any health issues has resulted in a negative impact on the population. The World Health Organization, WHO, report of 2021, indicated that adult women within the age range of 15 years and above constituted the greater percentage of people living with HIV in the year 2020. Among the percentages, female youths are believed to comprise the large number of people infected with the disease. Therefore, to reduce the rising rate of incidences, female

condoms contraceptive has been recommended as a protection to serve as a coping appraisal against the threat of diseases and other sexually related infections.

The theory also pointed out that the more people are sensitized and informed about the threats and dangers of health issues, the more people are likely to respond to the situation by taking precautionary measures to protect themselves against the perceived consequences of the threat. However, in a situation where information surrounding such a perceived threat is not intensified, people are behaviourally bound to disregard the threats by engaging in unhealthy practices which they do not perceive with any associating consequences. The female condom had been recommended as a contraceptive device to act as a protection against sexually transmitted infections(STIs), unprotected sex, and unwanted pregnancies among female youths and women. Regrettably, low information and sensitization on the usage in society, and among female youths have resulted in the low usage of the device. It has negatively affected some of these youths by being infected with HIV/AIDS among others.

This theory, as applicable and useful as it is to the discourse, fails to explain the culture, religion, and economic situation of the people involved. Some women or female youths consider condom use as the responsibility of their partners. And in some cases, the female youths are scared of the processes involved in inciting the device in their private parts which they considered an uncommon idea among their peers. Nevertheless, the theory has been able to establish the fact that protection motivation is possible among people to act against threats and fears only if there is enough information and sensitization about the contraceptive device.

III. Literature review

Female condom: Acceptability and awareness among female youths

The invention, introduction, and production of female condoms have over time channeled communication to the female folk that, protection against sexually transmitted infections is not limited to the male counterpart alone. They can also use the device to control their sexual life, keep safe sex, and protect against STIs and unwanted pregnancy. It is regarded to be effective in the control of sexually transmitted diseases(Vijayakumar et al, 2006). In addition, female folk stand the chance to work in male job-related areas and engage in many social activities, when their medical conditions are ascertained.

Okunola et al (2006) revealed in their study that a large percentage of youths 80 percent had indicated their knowledge and awareness about female condoms which was occasioned by mass media, health workers, and a commendable prevention knowledge against unwanted pregnancy, STIs, and HIV. Tavares et al (2008)also affirmed in their study that there was a high level of information among the respondents' on the use of condom contraceptives in any sexual activity. The study was intended to examine the awareness and knowledge about contraceptive use during sexual intercourse in Cape Verde. They revealed in their study that 84.72% of the respondents had reported having used condoms to protect themselves against STIs. Their level of awareness, acceptability, and usage has had a positive effect in the country by lowering the rate of STIs when compared to studies carried out in other countries. Salawu & Adeyemi(2013) also opined in their study that there was a low number of female youths with 12.6% knowing female condom usage. They had reported a low rate of acceptability and usage among the youths but they had got knowledge and awareness of female condoms. Mbarushimana & Ntaganira (2013) revealed contrary to Adeyemi that there was a high level of awareness and knowledge among students on the use of a female condom with a 79% response. The majority of them, 81% claimed that they got to know about female condoms through sensitization received to protect them against unwanted pregnancy, STIs, and HIV/AIDS. Tobin West et al (2013) in a related study carried out to know the awareness, acceptability, and use of female condoms among University students in Nigeria discovered that there was a low level of awareness among the students. Their findings agreed with Adeyemi who also reported in the affirmative.

Usman et al (2017) found in their study that there was an improvement in the awareness and acceptability of young persons in Nigeria about the use of female condoms by considering the social factors. (Obembe et al, 2017) carried out a study to examine the perception of female condoms among female youths. It was recorded that 10.8% of female youths have had a good perception of female condoms which was adequately low when compared with previous studies carried out among students in tertiary institutions The associated age range of respondents fell between 20-24 years. The age range likewise showcased that there was a related predictor for the low perception of female condoms among the respondents. Sekoni et al (2018) reported in their study that the majority of the respondents had the knowledge and awareness about the usage of female condoms in a situation to examine the respondents' sexual practices and willingness to use female condoms among female undergraduate students. Boraya & Gachau (2018) considered in their study that there was a relationship between the marital status of the respondents and the willingness to use female condoms among female youths in Kenya. They found out that the willingness to use the contraceptive was associated with funds and finance to purchase the device. Respondents also who were dependent and married as youths to their

partners likely to use a female condom than another marital status despite access to information about female condom use. Uchendu et al (2019) argued that the level of awareness and utilization among street youths in Southwestern Nigeria was determined by respondents' socio-demographic factors such as age, education, as well as social activity, and the experience of rape attempts on the respondents. Oranu et al (2020) submitted in their study that there was a high level of awareness among female undergraduate students to use a female condom. It reported that 60.9% of the youths believed that condoms could be used to prevent pregnancy and STIs. The study recorded that there was a higher level of awareness of to use of female condoms among the youths than in other previous studies. Abari et al (2020) study also supported Oranu et al study that female undergraduate students of the sampled school had a high level of awareness and knowledge about female condoms owing to some factors. The various studies unveiled the level of awareness and knowledge about the use of female condoms which progressively increased in the subsequent years of studies and research. It signified that information and sensitization passed among the youths were good indicators for the utilization of condom contraceptives in the present society.

Female condom: The reoccurring issues and factors hindering the use

The awareness, knowledge, and utilization of female condoms are determined largely by the information and sensitization disseminated per time to the target people in society. While some studies had recorded an increase in awareness and knowledge, other studies have recorded a decrease, average(Joakin et al, 2015), or zero level in knowledge about the female condom. On many occasions, the male condom has been vigorously projected as a contraceptive that could protect against STIs which further underestimates the advantages of using a female condom as well.

There are daunting factors and issues which keep reoccurring that have hindered the use, and knowledge about female condoms among female youths in society. Some of the factors highlighted were the unavailability, inaccessibility, and insertion problem of female condom devices among female folk. Okunola et al (2006) exposed in their study that Nigerian female undergraduates declined the use of female condoms due to sexual dissatisfaction, insertion difficulty, and personal indisposition to it. Salawu & Adeyemi (2013) associated the low level of female condom usage with the perception among the respondents that it might slip out during use, and the associated noise it caused during sexual activity. Tobin-West et al (2013) submitted that there were significant challenges in the use of female condoms among University students which include the unavailability of the contraceptive, high cost, and difficulty in inserting the device. Mokgetse & Ramukumba (2018) added that significant challenges against the usage of female condoms among young women were the shape of the device, material composure, unavailability of the device as well as lack of adequate information about the contraceptive. In a related development, Usman et al (2017) highlighted that the high cost of the device, unavailability, and insertion difficulty that they experienced over time had discouraged them from using the condom. Boraya & Gachau (2018) also revealed in their Study that factors were associated with the marital status of the user, the time frame between the time of insertion and actual use, attitude and negotiation skill of the user to bargain with the partner to use it or not. Sekoni (2018) revealed that though there was considerable awareness about the device among female students, they had declined the use of the device because it caused them discomfort and other related issues; insertion problem, and unavailability of the device. Gambir et al (2019) in a related study affirmed that there was a perceived high-cost purchase of women's condoms and the inability of the woman to make a concrete decision that centered on the usage with their partner. Uchendu et al (2019) differently found in their study that male domineering cultural norms, the misconception of poor sexual satisfaction during sex, accessibility, and unavailability had caused the low patronage to use a female condom. They added that shame and stigma associated with the purchase, partner disapproval, and insertion problem have been highlighted as factors hindering the usage of the device. Abari et al (2020) presented that though there was an increase in awareness among female undergraduate students it did not determine their compliance and acceptability level to use the device. The respondents had rejected the use of female condoms due to health implications, high cost of purchase, and difficulty to use, as well as the assumption by the respondents that the partner should shoulder the responsibility of using them. Akindele -Oscar et al (2020) revealed that 68.6% of the sampled population reported that they had never seen the device which indicated that their knowledge about female condoms was low. The study revealed that age was not an indicator to determine their knowledge of the device. In Oranu et al (2020), they discovered that respondents had declined the usage of female condoms because it reduced their pleasure during sex, the unreliability of the device, religious affiliation, and partner indisposition to the idea.

The above submissions on the factors hindering female condom usage have revealed the level of acceptance, knowledge, and usage among female folk which by indication has put them on the disadvantaged stage with the possibility of an increase in STIs-related issues. However, if efforts are geared towards expunging the highlighted issues and factors, the incidence cases of STIs, unprotected sex, and unwanted pregnancy among

female youths would be reduced among the youths by positively having better, vibrant, active youths in the society.

Female condom: What can be done to increase the usage and knowledge about the device

Indisputably, knowledge, acceptability, and usage of female condoms have not received the desired reception and patronage among female youths like the male condom in society. The purpose of inventing the device for use among female folk has not been fully achieved because some female youths still fall victim to associated STDs/STIs and unwanted pregnancies. However, efforts can be geared towards reactivating the campaigns on female condoms to bridge the gap of lapses that had been created over time. The following ways can be employed by every stakeholder in society by ensuring that female condoms are widely recognized and used by female youths.

Emphasizing Education

One of the reasons that have impeded the use of female condoms among female youths was the lack of adequate education that would have brought about their consciousness and knowledge about the usage of contraceptives. Education stands as one of the viable strategies for getting female youths inundated with condoms. Proper education about female condom(Ananga et al, 2017) gets them familiar with their usage and how well they can control their sexual life, and protect their lives against any sexually transmitted diseases. While employing educational means to sensitize them, the use of practical methods or materials to aid teaching is also vital. Emphasizing education on female condoms makes female youths acquire knowledge and usage, and keep a healthy life as well.

Ensuring availability and reduction in the price of the product

The non-availability of female condoms in many health stores has resulted in a lack of knowledge, awareness, and usage among many female youths. Ensuring adequate supply and availability(Mashanda-Tafaune & Monareng, 2015) in health stores, and pharmaceutical outlets allow female youths to gain access (Peters, 2014), and exposure to it while purchasing the device for use when desired. The availability of the products enables people to patronage, accept and use it as desired. Indeed, manufacturing companies have to produce more at a cheaper price like male condoms, while the distribution channels have to be sustained for easy access, and availability to female folks.

Public promotion and local marketing

Male condoms had received extensive attention in the past owing to wide publicity among the people. The female condom can also get similar attention and publicity if there is a will and eagerness by concerned stakeholders to make it happen. Promotion and local marketing of the contraceptive can do more in creating awareness, acceptability, and usage among female youths who are vulnerable to getting infected with sexually related diseases(Hoffman et al, 2004; Ananga et al, 2017). National or governmental promotional campaign agencies and interventions (Wang et al, 2011) can help in this regard by promoting female condoms among female youths. Such promotion and campaigns were successfully carried out in countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Brazil, and Zimbabwe(Hoffman et al, 2004; Betsinska, et al, 2011). Artz et al(2000) believed that promoting female condoms in a positive way such as through social marketing(Stead et al, 2007) can make more women patronize it admittedly.

Enabling more information and use of media

Knowledge, awareness, and usage of female condoms can be expanded through the use of mass media, social media, and getting people informed always(Hutchison, 2005). When information is passed regularly among the people, it creates consciousness, and knowledge about the contraceptive device in society, and importantly the female youths. Making use of information and mass or social media gives wide and consistent communication to people(Agha et al, 2002; Devanier et al, 2002; Choi et al, 2003). The use of media helps to spread the information to a larger population while targeting the proposed population.

Healthcare providers and attitudes of healthcare workers

Female condom usage, knowledge, and acceptability can be taught and adequately communicated by healthcare providers, counselors, and clinicians who are knowledgeable in health matters. They are capable of teaching people how to access and use the female condom after they must have received adequate training to do so(Mashanda-Tafaune & Monareng, 2015). Importantly, attitudes and approaches employed by the practitioners go a long way in passing the right message about the device which can result in commendable patronage and usage among female youths (Gollub, 2000; Devanler et al, 2002; Choi et al, 2003).

IV. Conclusion

The female condom is useful and effective in the use against sexually transmitted diseases or infections, unwanted pregnancies, or other diseases through sexual contact. The usefulness of female condoms outweighs any assumptions made by female youths. Female condom helps female youths to gain control over their sexual life, maintain healthy lifestyles and by extension, help them engage in meaningful labour force or social activities in society without any hindrance. Although there are noticeable barriers to the acceptability and usage of the female condom in society, efforts can be put into overcoming the challenges whereby female youths can benefit from it in the long run. All stakeholders, government, and health workers can help in this direction so that they cannot perpetually be victims of the lapses created through non-use of female condoms.

Conflict of Interest

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