A Perception Study of Nigerian Mass Media Enlightenment on Neglected Tropical Diseases

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Abstract

Guided by the agenda setting and muted group and issue theories, the present study was designed to investigate public perception of Nigerian mass media enlightenment on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), focusing on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis, using the survey research design. The population of the study was 667,000 comprising of residents from Shendam, Kanke and Barkin Ladi. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw up a sample size of 390. Simple percentage method of data analysis was deployed. Results revealed that there was virtually low education and information from the Nigerian mass media regarding Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis. The study, therefore, recommends that the mass media in Nigeria should pay more attention to the (NTDs), especially Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis as inadequate enlightenment has continued to lead to more deaths in the country.

Keywords: Neglected Tropical Diseases, Agenda setting, muted group, mass media, health.

Introduction

Nigeria is said to be leading in terms of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in sub-Saharan Africa, with a 25% rating (Federal Ministry of Heath, Nigeria, 2013-2017). NTDs are a diverse group of 20 conditions that are caused by a variety of pathogens including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and toxins. They cause devastating health, social and economic consequences to more than one billion people. They are predominantly in tropical and sub-tropical areas of the world. They are widespread in the poorest and neglected regions and thrive among populations where safe water, good sanitation and access to healthcare are substandard or completely absent (World Health Organisation, 2022). Among the consequences of NTDs are pain, blindness, disability, disfiguration and, sometimes, death (*Vanguard,* 1 February, 2022).

Furthermore, statistics show that, globally, Nigeria is ranked first on cases of onchocerciasis and schistosomiasis. Both intestinal and urogenital schistosomiasis are endemic in the country (Hotez & Kamath, 2009; Njepuome, Ogbu-Pearce, Okoronko& Igbe, 2009). The country is also leading with cases of lymphatic

filariasis in Africa and has about 18 million people at risk of trachoma, with almost 1.3 million people infected with trichiasis (International Trachoma Initiative, n.d.).

Similarly, figures from Neglected Tropical Diseases Nigeria Multi - Year Master Plan 2015 – 2020 say that the PC-NTDs pose a huge disease burden on the population. About 50 million persons are at risk for Onchocerciasis while over 114 million Nigerians are at risk of lymphatic filariasis. In addition to that, an approximate 43 million and 35 million persons need treatments for schistosomiasis and for STH respectively, while nearly 20 million persons are at risk for trachoma.

Reports have it that Nigeria has made appreciable progress towards the global NTDs elimination goals. In 2013, Nigeria was officially certified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to have eliminated guinea worm. Plateau and Nasarawa States also eliminated the transmission of Lymphatic filariasis in 2017, while Kaduna, Kebbi and Zamfara States are on track towards the elimination of the disease transmission. For Trachoma, 96 Local Government Areas, LGAs, out of 122 LGAs in Nigeria that are endemic have attained elimination threshold for the active stage of the disease, while 61 LGAs have attained elimination phase for the blinding stage for the disease (*Vanguard,* 1 February, 2022). ‘’Today, an estimated 120 million Nigerians are still at risk of NTDs, which despite being preventable and treatable, continue to cause severe disfigurement and other long-term disabilities that create obstacles to education, employment, economic growth and overall development’’(*Vanguard,* 1 February, 2022).

Despite these efforts, these diseases are still endemic in the country. For example, a report by *The Punch* newspaper on Wednesday, February, 2, 2022 entitled ‘’Kano confirms spread of five neglected tropical diseases’’ has it that Kano State recorded the outbreak of river blindness in 18 local government areas; Lymphatic Filariasis and Bilharzia in 44 local government areas, Trachoma in 10 and soil transmitted Helminthic across the State, in addition to 236 detected leprosy cases’’. *The Guardian* of 1st February, 2022 reports that a non-governmental organisation, Carter Centre had treated 36.1 million people with Albendazole and Mectizan, with preventable chemotherapy for Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) in Plateau and Nasarawa States.

Cluelessness and insufficient expertise to recognise and find cure for these diseases have continued to act as a clog and have made NTDs to continue to fester

in Nigeria (Emeto et al. 2021). Further, the NDTs continue to flourish due to underreporting (Emeto et al., 2021).

One of the functions of the mass media is health education. Mass media through their health education try to empower individuals, groups, organizations, and communities, by imparting health information and addressing health issues with a view to positively influence their health behaviour'' (Gupta & Sharma (2015) as cited in Sharma & Gupta 2017, p. 27). They further assert that mass media impart necessary health information in our daily life enabling common people to take appropriate decision about different aspects of their lives and, most especially, with respect to health.

There are existing studies on mass media and health education (Emeto, Salawu, Salawu & Fawole, 2021; Gever & Ezeah, 2020; Njepuome, Ogbu-Pearce, Okoronko & Igbe, 2009). Emeto et al.'s study focuses on recognition and reporting of NTDs by primary health care workers in Ibadan, Nigeria; Gever and Ezeah was on the media and health education: Did Nigerian media provide sufficient warning messages on coronavirus disease? While Njepuome et al.'s was on controlling onchocerciasis: The Nigerian experience. With all these studies, there is still insufficient knowledge on mass media and health education and it is from this gaps that this study seeks to investigate public perception of Nigerian mass media enlightenment on NTDs focusing on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis in Plateau State, Nigeria, with Kanke, Shendam and Barkin Ladi as Local Government Areas of study.

It is on this premise that this study attempts to assess the views of the public on how the Nigerian mass media have set an agenda on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis, with a focus on Plateau State, Nigeria and only the mainstream media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) were studied.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of respondents' readership, viewership and listenership of Nigerian mass media?
2. How does the mass media been able to educate the public on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis in Plateau State?

Literature Review

The present study reviewed empirical literature with a view to having knowledge of existing studies on the NTDs.

Some of the NTDs include **Lymphatic filariasis,** which -is a mosquito-transmitted disease caused by parasitic worms that damage parts of the immune system. It is a painful disease and can lead to disfigurement; **Onchocerciasis** (also known as river blindness) - is caused by an infection from parasitic worms transmitted by black flies, which breed in fast-flowing streams and rivers. The disease can lead to debilitating itching, disfiguring skin conditions and sight loss. **Schistosomiasis** (also known as snail fever or bilharzia) - is an illness that develops when people come into contact with water contaminated by certain snails carrying the disease-causing parasites, which penetrate the skin and move through the body. Infection primarily affects the urinary or intestinal system, causing chronic ill health and in some cases, death; **Soil-transmitted helminths (STH) -** are a group of intestinal parasites that thrive in places where sanitation is poor and the soil is warm and humid.

The most common STH-causing parasites are roundworm, whipworm and hookworm. Infection reduces the body's ability to absorb nutrients and vitamins. **Trachoma** is caused by a contagious bacterial infection of the eye. It is commonly spread through contact with contaminated hands or clothing and by flies coming into contact with a person's eyes or nose. It can cause scarring of the inner eyelid and in some cases, irreversible blindness (United Combat for Neglected Tropical Diseases, 2016). Others are **Buruli Ulcer (BU) -** is a chronic, indolent, necrotizing infectious disease of the skin caused by Mycobacterium ulcerans; **Rabies -** is a neglected zoonotic disease that is transmitted as a result of bites from rabid animals; **Leishmaniasis -** This disease is caused by any of a number of species of protozoa in the genus Leishmania; **Yaws -** is one of the chronic bacterial infections (endemic treponematoses) often affecting the skin and presenting skin lesions that are caused by treponemes. It is transmitted primarily through skin contact with an infected person; **Mycetoma -** is a chronic, progressively destructive morbid inflammatory disease usually of the foot but which can affect any part of the body.

Infection occurs when the causative organism enters the body through minor trauma or a penetrating injury, commonly thorn pricks. The disease affects mainly young adults especially those who walk barefooted and are manual workers; **Dengue -** a viral disease, is transmitted by the bite of a mosquito infected with

one of the four dengue virus serotypes, and is not known to be transmitted directly from person-to-person. A febrile illness affects infants, young children and adults with symptoms ranging from mild fever to incapacitating high fever, with severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, and rash appearing between 3 to14 days after the infective bite (Neglected Tropical Diseases Nigeria Multi - Year Master Plan 2015 – 2020).

Equally, on the list of these diseases are **Leprosy** (A chronic, endemic, communicable disease characterised by nodular skin lesions, nerve paralysis, and physical mutilation caused by the micro-organism Mycobacterium or bacillus leprae); **Human African Trypanosomiasis** (A disease caused by infection with the parasite Trypanosoma brucei; African trypanosomiasis is transmitted to humans by tsetse fly bites); **Lymphoedema** (A swelling in an arm or leg caused by a lymphatic system blockage, part of the immune and circulatory systems. It is most commonly caused by lymph node removal or damage due to cancer treatment); **Trichiasis** (A condition of ingrowing hairs about an orifice, especially ingrowing eyelashes; the presence of hairlike filaments in the urine).

Ascariasis (is an infection of the small intestine caused by Ascaris Lumbricoides, which is a species of roundworm), **Dracunculiasis** (A parasitic infection occurring in parts of Africa without access to safe water. It affects people in rural, deprived, and isolated communities who depend mainly on open stagnant surface water sources, such as ponds, for drinking) and **Chagas** (American trypanosomiasis, is a zoonotic tropical disease caused by the flagellate protozoan disease; an infection with trypanosome cruiz, transmitted by triatominae bug bites or, less commonly, via ingestion of sugar cane juice or foods contaminated with infected triatominae bugs or their faeces, trans placentally from an infected mother to her foetus, or via blood transfusion or an organ transplant from an infected donor) (Healthline Editorial, 2019; WHO, 2022; Pearson, 2020 & the New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, 2013).

According to statistics, 149 countries are said to be endemic with NTDs and it is the second condition of diseases after HIV/AIDS in terms of number of people affected by the ailments. There are over one billion people with at least an NTD (including more than 500 million children) and 500, 000 deaths yearly (Emeto et al., 2021). According to Nigeria Health Watch (2017), NTDs kill about 150 people worldwide yearly. Data from the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health

reveals that an estimated 122 million Nigerians are at risk of 15 of the 20 NTDs (*Vanguard,* 1 February, 2022). This implies that two out of every three Nigerians are at risk of one or more of the diseases. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 500 million people are affected by soil-transmitted helminth, Schistosomiasis, lymphatic filariasis, trachoma and onchocerciasis, Hookworm affects 40 to 50 million school-aged children and about seven million pregnant women (Molyneux et al., 2005; Olsen, 2007; Brooker et al., 2006 & Brooker el al., 2008 cited in Emeto et al., 2021).

Emeto et al., (2021) conducted a study on recognition and reporting of NTDs by primary health care workers in Ibadan, Nigeria. The research found that one hundred and eighty-seven respondents had good knowledge of NTDs. The most known NTDs are Schistosomiasis, Rabies and Onchocerciasis. The study concluded that healthcare workers knowledge on NTDs was inadequate. It recommended a periodic training and continued education on NTDs. Likewise, the Primary Health Care workers also require supportive supervision.

This study opened a gap for the current one when it argues that there was shortage of studies on NTDs in developing countries. Nigeria is one of the developing countries, hence the current study.

Oluwale (2017) reviewed related literature on the Nigerian NTDs by focusing on annotated bibliography. The study found that limited studies have been conducted on vector or intermediate host of the parasite that causes the disease. It also found that Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLIN) coverage was generally low in areas where Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) prevalence was high or co-endemic with Loa. Also, the study identified important demographic factors influencing perception of the benefits of taking ivermectin.

The research concluded that the extensive database and series of maps produced in this study provide an important overview of the LF programme and will assist in maximising existing interventions while ensuring efficient use of resources as the programme scales up. The use of GIS technology in epidemiology and control of disease is a recent trend in Nigeria and the study recommended it increased use.

Oluwale's (2017) study is related to the current one, given that it discussed Neglected Tropical Diseases but differ in the research method. As the previous

research looked at the study by sourcing for data through PubMed and Ovid databases. The present study used as its methodology by way of assessing the perception of Nigerians on how the mass media in the country have set agenda on the NTDs.

Balasegaram et al. (2014) carried out a research on Neglected Diseases in the news. The study is a content analysis of recent international media coverage focussing on leishmaniasis and trypanosiamiasis. The findings revealed that only 113 articles in a 53-month period met the inclusion criteria, with no strong trends or increases in coverage. Overall, the *BBC* had the highest coverage with 20 results, followed by the *Financial Times* and *Agence France Press. CNN* had the least coverage with one result. The study concluded that public health agencies need to raise priority for NTDs' advocacy and recommended that innovative strategies, such as reporting grants or creating a network of vices, may be needed.
Mackey and Liang (2012) did a review of the 17 NTDs classified by the WHO to determine if those NTDs were also categorized by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases (''EReNTDs''). The study identified common characteristics and risks associated with EReNTDs as EReNTDs are widespread and impact millions. They disproportionately burden resource-poor communities, but have also recently spread to higher income settings through globalized trade and travel. They have negative economic impact on local communities as they are heavily influenced by poor social determinants of health. They could be fatal and heavily dependent upon effective vector control to prevent spread. The research recommended that neglected subset of tropical diseases requires urgent attention and unique incentive structures to encourage investment in innovation and coordination.

Mackey and Liang's (2012) study did not talk about the role of the mass media in educating the people about Neglected Tropical Diseases. This is the gap that the current study seeks to fill by assessing the views of Nigerians on the agenda setting of Nigerian mass media enlightenment on the NTDs.

Kamga et al.'s (2012) study entitled "A community survey on the knowledge of neglected tropical diseases in Cameroon"'' adopted the survey research design for its conduct. Findings showed that globally the percentage of persons with good knowledge of one of the neglected tropical diseases was low. Diseases for which the population had the highest percentages of knowledge were leprosy, soil-transmitted helminth infections, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasi and human African trypanosomiasis. Diseases for which people had the least percentages of

knowledge were leishmaniosis, dracunculiasis, buruli ulcer, trachoma, endemic treponematosis and schistosomiasis. Further, results revealed that populations living in urban areas had a greater knowledge of the NTDs than those living in rural and peri-urban areas. The study concluded that there was a low community knowledge pattern of NTDs, mostly among the female populations and people living in rural areas. It recommended that mass media health education as one of the strategies for the national control policy of NTDs.

From the suggestion of Kamga et al.'s (2012) study, the present study picked it up from there by examining perceptions of Nigerians on whether the country's mass media have performed well in their information and education functions regarding NTDs (Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis).

The recommendation of the reviewed study is a wake-up call to this current one, which looks at how the Nigerian mass media educates and enlightens the Nigerians on the NTDs.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the agenda setting theory and the muted group theory as they relate to the mass media. The agenda setting theory is concerned with how the mass media select certain happenings in the society and put them up for public discourse. The theory was developed by Bernard Cohen was credited to have popularized and articulated the agenda setting theory in 1963 (Chinedu, Nwamaka and Olarewaju, 2017). They state that the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. The elements involved in agenda setting according to Chinedu et al (2017) include the quantity or frequency of reporting, prominence given to the reports through headline displays, pictures, and layout in newspapers, magazines, films, graphics or timing on radio and television as well as the cumulative media specific effects over time. This implies that the theory elaborates the connection in terms of the relationships between the emphases that the mass media put on an issue (Little & Foss, 2009 cited in Ude-Apeh & Igboeli, 2021). Based on the tenets of this theory, the mass media are believed to have the capacity to set the public agenda especially in masters of opinions, value, focus and priorities (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009). The theory is relevant to this work because it buttresses the power of the mass media in influencing public perception of Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis reportage by the Nigerian mass media.

The Muted Group Theory, on its part, propounded by Shirley and Ardener in 1968, explains why certain groups or issues in the society are muted, silent or not heard in or on the media. They say that in every society a social hierarchy exists that privileges some groups over others. These groups that function at the top of the social hierarchy determine to a great extent the communication system of the entire society and the muteness occurs because of the lack of power that is given to any group or issue that does not mean much to the mass media. Hence, such group or issue occupies the low end of the pole in the media publicity ladder.
In the context of this study, the Muted Group Theory could adequately explain the undertones mass media organisations usually use to silence some issues or people in the society. Furthermore, a good understanding of the theory could help in predicting the outcome of ineffective mass media coverage of Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis and the implication is increased in the spread of these diseases due to low mass media reportage.

Methodology

The researchers made use of the survey research design and employed the instrument of questionnaire to collect data from the population. The questionnaire was adopted. The total population was 667, 000.The study's population were residents of Shendam, Kanke and Barkin Ladi LGAs, which according to the information gotten from City Population (2016), the projected population of these three LGAs in 2016 were 162, 800 inhabitants in Kanke, 235, 500 inhabitants in Barkin Ladi and 268, 700 inhabitants in Shendam respectively. Further, the study adopted multistage sampling technique. And at the beginning of the sampling, the three local government areas were purposively selected from the three senatorial districts of Plateau State, one representing each senatorial district to compare their results. A simple random sampling technique was deployed to select respondents. In pulling out a sample size from the total population, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) method was used and method gave a sample size of 390. The researcher studied only population that can read and write.

Further, copies of questionnaire were then administered on a face-to-face basis in Shendam , Barkin Ladi and Kabwir towns. At the end, the researchers retrieved all the questionnaire copies distributed but only 384 were correctly filled. Thereafter, a five-point Likert scale and the criteria mean of 5 points is 3.00 and a frequency table was used. For the criteria mean 3.00 in the Likert scale, it implies that when the table mean is higher than the criteria mean, the statement is accepted i.e., from 3.00 to above. But if the table mean is lower than the criteria

mean, it implies that the statement is rejected i.e., less than 3.00. The study then used mean deviation, frequency tables and simple percentages to present and analyse data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This aspect focuses on presentation and analysis of data generated from the respondents. As stated above, only 384 questionnaire copies were found worthy of analysis.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Gender)

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Males	337	88%
Females	47	12%
Total	**384**	**100%**

Note: Male respondents participated in the research more compared to females. The percentage of male is higher than that of females (88% - males) and (12% - females).

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Age)

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-25 years	32	8%
26-35 years	39	10%
36-40 years	77	20%
41-49 years	108	28%
50 and above years	128	33%
Total	**384**	**100%**

Note: Data on the Table 2 indicates that most of the respondents are between the ages of 50 and above. The implication of this is that in Nigeria, the age grade of people who patronise the mainstream media more are the aged.

Table 3
Frequency of Respondents' Choice of Nigerian Mass Media for Information Consumption

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Newspapers (*ThisDay, Vanguard, The Punch, The Sun, The Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation, Daily Trust, Daily Independent, New Telegraph, Nigerian Pilot, The Authority, Business Day)* , etc.	61	16%
Magazines *(Newswatch, Tell Magazine, Happiness Magazine, TW Magazine, Thinkers Magazine, Nigerian Magazine, among others)*	18	5%
Radio *(Highland FM, Plateau Radio Television Corporation, Rhythm FM, Jay FM, Unity FM, Precious FM, Nasarawa Broadcasting Service, among others)*	178	46%
Television *(Nigerian Television Authority, Television Continental, African Independent Television, Arise News, Channels Television, Plateau Radio Television Corporation, WAZOBIA TV, to mention but a few)*	127	33%
Total	**384**	**100%**

Note: The frequency of respondents' preference of mainstream Nigerian mass media when classified revealed that most of the respondents get information from the radio. This is represented by 46% on Table 3. The implication of this may not be unconnected to the fact that in most developing countries, which Nigeria belongs, the masses depend largely on radio for information, education, entertainment among others.

Table 4
Extent of Respondents' Readership, Viewership and Listenership of Nigerian Mass Media

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Great Extent	219	57%
Great Extent	99	26%
Medium Extent	43	11%
Low Extent	16	4%
Very Low Extent	7	2%
Total	**384**	**100%**

Note: With reference to readership, listenership and viewership of Nigerian mass media, data gathered revealed that most of the respondents usually exposed themselves to media content on a very great extent. This implies that there might be good understanding of issues presented in/on the media by the respondents.

Table 5

Respondents' perception on the content of Nigerian Mass Media on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis

Items	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean Rating	Decision
Nigerian mass media have to a very great extent enlightened and educated the masses on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis	11	18	61	89	205	1.8	Rejected
Nigerian mass media have to a great extent sensitised the public on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis	16	22	49	90	207	1.8	Rejected
Mass media in Nigeria have to a medium extent informed and educated the people on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis	9	14	59	83	219	1.7	Rejected
Mass media in Nigeria have to a low extent enlightened and educated the masses on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis	216	97	45	17	9	4.2	Accepted
Mass media in Nigeria have to a very low extent educated and informed the public on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and	243	91	32	6	12	4.4	Accepted

Onchocerciasis
Findings as reflected in Table 5, therefore, indicated that the mass media have not been enlightening the people on the prevalence of Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis. The implication would be in the increase in the spread of these diseases.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question was to ascertain the extent of respondents' readership, viewership and listenership of Nigerian mass media. From the data obtained, implications were drawn to indicate that most of the respondents, amounting to 46%, said that they considered the use of radio as their major source information (see table 3 above). This finding is in line with other studies, where it is indicatedthat radio is a good tool of information dissemination to people in semi-urban and rural areas in developing countries (Mohammed, 2020; Bwakan, 2020). Ezebuenyi, Ugochukwu and Ibeamuma (2021) corroborate that radio is one of the most powerful universal means of instant public communication through conveying information, entertainment, education and persuasion in form of programmes. Uwakwe (2010) adds that radio's unique usefulness lies in its capacity to surmount geographical and economic barriers to get to the rich and the poor, old and young, rural and urban dwellers, the educated and the illiterate, the professionals, the majority and the minority.

The second research question sought to find out the extent of respondents' readership, viewership and listenership of Nigerian mass media. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents opted for the 'very great extent' option. This represents 57% (see Table 4). This implies that there might be a good understanding of issues presented in/on the media by the respondents. Edu (2021) corroborates this finding when he notes that members of the society, in order to equip themselves with recent and past happenings in their domains, usually glue themselves to the mass media. Coleman (n.d.) equally says that to know more about issues in all their ramifications, the people purchase the mass media contents in all its forms.

The study also discovered that the respondents scored the Nigerian mass media low in the coverage of Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis. This finding is in line with that of Balasegaram, Balasegaram, Malvy and Millet (2014). Their study found out that out of the 113 articles in newspapers that met the criteria used in their study, there are no indication of any remarkable trends or

increase in the coverage of NTDs. Also, Kamga et al. (2012) discovered that, globally, the percentage of persons with good knowledge of some of the NTDs was low. This finding, therefore, justifies the adoption of muted group and issue theory in the study, which says that some groups or issues do occupy the low end of the pole in the media publicity ladder. This also justifies the provisions of the agenda setting theory used in the research, which says that the mass media selects certain happenings in the society and puts them up for public discourse, while, and at the same time, other issues are completely downplayed.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate public perception of the Nigerian mass media in terms of enlightenment over the NTDs with special focus on Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis. The study concludes that there was low in terms of education and information from the Nigerian mass media regarding Lymphatic Filariasis, Schistosomiasis and Onchocerciasis. The implication of this may not be unconnected to the fact that in most developing countries, which Nigeria belongs, the masses depend largely on the radio for information, education and entertainment, among others. Also, these diseases may continue to be on the increase since the mass media in the country are do not provide the general populace with the much the needed information about the NTDs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends:

i. That the mass media in Nigeria should pay more attention to the NTDs, especially, the Lymphatic Filariasis, the Schistosomiasis and the Onchocerciasis as inadequate enlightenment has continued to lead to more deaths in the country.
ii. Further studies are required in this area as the literature reveals paucity of research as much as NTDs are concerned within the Nigerian context.

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