

Correctional Health Workers' Aggressive Behaviour and the Wellbeing of Inmates in Enugu Correctional Service, Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of Nigeria Correctional Centre is to provide services that reform and rehabilitate inmates. Unfortunately, the inmates in the Correctional Facilities in Nigeria are faced with a lot of challenges ranging from welfare to health. This study is aimed at examining correctional health workers' aggressive behaviour and the wellbeing of the inmates in Enugu Correctional Service. The study is a qualitative study where only in-depth interview was adopted. The population of the study is 2130 inmates and 11 health workers and the sample size for the study is 337 respondents. In-depth interview was used as the instrument for data collection. The result revealed, among other things, that a good number of the inmates face humiliation in the hands of health workers which resultantly make the inmates to be aggressive and such can lead to unfavorable health condition. The study concludes that both inmates and health workers exhibit aggressive behaviour, which do not only affect inmates' health needs but also affects the social setting of the Correctional Service. Based on the findings, the study recommends that continuous training should be given to health workers to enable them handle inmates' health needs and aggressive behaviour when erupted.

Keywords: Aggressive Behaviour, Attitude, Correctional Services, Wellbeing, Reformation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Correctional setting as a total institution has rules governing its daily activities. Yet, these rules do not always serve the needs of both the prisoners and their guards. As a result, therefore, there may occur an accumulation of potential and real emergencies (threats, disturbances, conflicts, strains), resulting from frustration and occupation-related stress, which in turn, could lead to an increase on the aggression level and aggressive behaviour. Tenibiaje (2010) argues that, in spite of the fact that prisons are supposed to be a place for transformation and rehabilitation, Nigerian Prisons have become training ground for inmates to become hardened criminals. This raises the question as to whether correctional officers have the requisite attitudes to match the paradigm shift in correctional facilities. Lariviere, (2001) argues that, because of their number and influence, correctional officers are ideally placed to rehabilitate and influence the inmates positively. This can mainly be done during their frequent interaction. It is important, therefore, to gain insight into their attitudes, particularly as these attitudes relate to inmates and the prison system. Zimbardo (1973), cited in Cashmore et al. (2016), enumerates various correctional workers attitudes in the panel setting such as sadistic personality of the guards, reluctant and punitive behaviour, pessimistic, authoritative use of brute force and abusive languages. Some studies used the following concepts: bullying, intimidation, horizontal/lateral violence and abusive language (Cashmore et al. 2016).

These authors used attributes such as psychological violence, incivility and physical violence to describe disruptive behaviour in healthcare work. Negative attitudes have been demonstrated in some studies. Prison officers have been described as cynical and aggressive (Abdulsalam and Babatunde, 2014). Some seem to hold the view that the correctional facilities' main objective is to offer passive storage of criminals rather than to promote rehabilitation and prevention (Abdulsalam and Babatunde, 2014). These sociological scholars argue further that such negative attitudes seem to be more common in correctional facilities with little focus on rehabilitation than in institutions with a strong focus on such goals. In addition, the inmates' attitudes towards their fellow prisoners, and indeed, the inmates' attitudes toward themselves, i.e. their self-esteem, are important, because these attitudes are likely to influence the way prisoners respond to the correctional regime and the overall effectiveness of the various rehabilitation programmes offered. Whether rehabilitation will be successful will depend, largely, on the attitudes held by the population into which the prisoner will be released. Studies reviewed

indicate that this important knowledge concept has not been extensively researched. Thereby leaving an important knowledge gap for which this study seeks to fill. This study explored aggressive behavior of correctional health workers and its effects on inmates health needs in Enugu Correctional Service. The term aggression is usually defined as “a behaviour directed towards inflicting suffering to another person, who is motivated to avoid it” (Wojciszke, 2003). The scholar submitted that if the main goal of such an activity is to inflict pain, we deal with hostile aggression. If, however, causing suffering serves some other purposes we face, it is called instrumental aggression. In the working conditions of a correctional facility, the latter may become a means of pacification (Wojciszke, 2003).

Equally, aggression is a behaviour that is unwanted and it is perceived by the person that receives it as intrusive and harmful. This definition excludes accidental acts that lead to harm such as losing control of a motor vehicle and killing a pedestrian, but includes behaviours intended to harm even if the attempt fails, such as when a person attempts to shoot but misses a human target. Aggression among prison inmates is, undoubtedly, an important issue, and it is a behaviour that occurs among all types of prisoners-men, women, juvenile, young and adult offenders (Wojciszke, 2003).

Studies have shown that prison inmates engage in wide range of aggressive behaviour such as violence towards others, suicidal attempt, suicide; deliberate self harm, substance use, unprotected sexual activity; slavery and destruction of public property that increase their probability of being involved in serious physical diseases or mental disorder. Such behaviour results in frequent conflict, leading to death(s), injuries to self or others (Suresh, Pratina, Rajani Kweur&Madhusudhan, 2011). According to Chandrasheken et. al. (2007), they believed that aggression is present in each of us either prison inmates or non-prison inmates and these can be modified by experience in both positive and negative ways. They have defined aggressive behaviour as a behaviour aimed at causing harm or pain to others or self. Then aggression can be manifested towards self or others and it can be direct or indirect, physical or emotional, active or passive and verbal or non-verbal. Consequently, most researchers conceptualize that working in a high security prison is stressful and can affect those who work in such a setting. Lindquist and Whitehead (1986) explained it best when they observed that correctional officers are as much imprisoned as their captives, and a very real pain of that imprisonment is the interaction with less than desirable persons. But how does working in such a violent subculture day after day affect the inmate health needs, attitudes, career, home life, marriage, other social and personal interactions with family and friends outside the confines of the institutional walls? These remain an open question among scholars, thereby bringing to limelight, the need for this study. Sociological scholars have identified factors that cause aggression at workplace such as a correctional facility as the following: provocations by the inmates; accumulation of emotional stimuli during duty (Bettencourt and Miller, 1996) special norms and social expectations leading to dehumanization of inmates and judging them according to stereotypes (Zimbardo, 1973). There are also other indirect factors such as dwelling place, workplace, seniority and chain of command that can affect intensity of the aggression syndrome.

In different regions of many countries (e.g. western countries Europe, USA, Italy etc.) – due to civilisation, economical and cultural diversity – one can observe different norms, customs and acceptance for different behaviours, including the aggressive ones. Also, family traditions may differ a lot unlike what is seen and experienced in African general and Nigeria in particular. The researcher observed after extensive review of relevant literatures, dearth of studies and somewhat conflicting assessment on correctional health workers aggressive behaviour and inmates' health needs. It is against this backdrop that this study is designed to specifically explore aggressive behavior of correctional health workers and how it affects inmates' health needs in Enugu correctional service in South East of Nigeria. In the course of this study, the following research question was addressed: How does correctional health workers aggressive behaviour affect effective health care delivery to inmates in Enugu Correctional Service?

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore correctional health workers' aggressive behaviour and inmates' health needs in Enugu Correctional Service in South East of Nigeria.

Significance of the study

The study will have both practical and theoretical significance. Practically the outcome of this study will be of utmost importance to correctional health workers in general, prison administrators, prisoners and society at large. To the correctional health workers, it will enable them acquire the necessary knowledge good required to handle factors militating against effective health care delivery to inmates. To Prison administrators, it will assist them to initiate policies that will enhance health workers attitudes towards effective healthcare delivery to inmates. To the larger society, the study will also show that there is more to prison health care, that in addition to solving the immediate health problems of prisoners generally, Prison Health Care also provides

opportunities that may benefit the wider community with more positive attitude to personal health and better health than they entered prison with.

Theoretically, this study will add to the existing body of knowledge on correctional studies. It will serve as a reference point to scholars and researchers in the field and will help to give rise to further studies in social science in general.

Scope of the Study

This study is designed to explore correctional health workers' attitudes in Enugu Correctional Service in the South East of Nigeria. The content scope is designed to examine correctional workers' aggressive behaviour and health needs of inmates in Enugu Correctional Service Centre.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The term aggression is usually defined as "a behaviour directed towards inflicting suffering to another person who is motivated to avoid it" (Wojciszke, 2003). If the main goal of such an activity is to inflict pain, we deal with hostile aggression. If, however, causing suffering serves some other purposes, we face the so-called instrumental aggression. In the working conditions of a correctional facility, the latter may become a means of pacification (Wojciszke, 2003). Secondly, aggression is perceived as behaviour that is unwanted and it is perceived by the person that receives it as intrusive and harmful. This definition includes behaviours intended to harm even if the attempt fails, such as when a person attempts to shoot but misses a human target. Aggression among prison inmates is, undoubtedly, an important issue; and it is a behaviour that occurs among all types of prisoners-men, women, juvenile, young and adult offenders (Wojciszke, 2003).

Aggression can occur in varieties of situations, one important domain to understand aggression is the workplace. Workplace aggression is considered a specific type of counterproductive work behaviour and it is defined as any act of aggression, physical assault, threatening or coercive behavior that causes physical or emotional harm in a work setting, Neuman and Baron (1998). Some researchers specify that workplace aggression only includes efforts to harm co-workers, former co-workers, current employers or past employers. Others include workplace aggression – any behaviour intended to harm another person that is enacted in a workplace.

Studies have shown that prison inmates engage in wide range of aggressive behaviour. Tenibiaje, (2010), argues that in spite of the fact that prisons are supposed to be a place for transformation and rehabilitation, Nigerian Prisons have become training ground for inmates to become hardened criminals. This raises the question as to whether correctional officers have the requisite attitudes to match the paradigm shift in correctional facilities. Lariviere, (2001) argues that, because of their number and influence, correctional officers are ideally placed to rehabilitate and influence the inmates positively. This can mainly be done during their frequent interaction. It is important, therefore, to gain insight into their attitudes, particularly as these attitudes relate to inmates and the prison system.

Augustine, Briston and Dankitt (2011) examined correctional attitudes toward the new responsibilities of transforming inmates through correctional counseling, detailing the demographic, positional and occupational characteristics that predict the correctional attitudes. The study found out that correctional officers held affirmative attitudes towards correctional counseling and that age and rank were good predictors of correctional attitudes. The implication of this finding is that there is need to impress on the correctional officers the significance of correctional counseling.

Kristine and Dorothy (1997) examined correctional Health Care Nurses attitudes towards inmates. The study adopted a survey research design. The attitude toward prisoners' scale (ATPS) was administered to 146 nurses practicing at 19 correctional facilities in five states. Demographic data were collected to see if age, education, gender, or length of time working in corrections influenced nurses. Results recorded that the age of the respondents – whether they practiced in a jail or a prison setting – significantly influenced their attitudes. Overall attitude scores for correctional nurses were lower (more negative) than the score of almost all other previously measured groups.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study are the Partnership model and Magnet concept theory of Applebaum (2012) and Aiken et al., (2001) which are anchored on partnership between prisons, private vendor and university hospital. This promulgation features enabled nurses to fully use their knowledge and promote professional nursing practice, including unit-based decision-making processes, adequate staffing, and investments in the education and expertise of nurses that enhance effective health care delivery to inmates in correctional settings (Schmalenberg and Kramer, 2008). Correctional administrators can expect a medical school to deliver rational, effective and cost-efficient assessment and intervention service. Although many

dedicated and talented clinicians have always chosen to work in penal setting, correctional employment has suffered from poor image for many years. However, a program managed by a respected medical school has a greater likelihood of improving the stature of correctional work and attracting competent clinicians. The reputation and credibility of a medical school can help with the recruitment and retention of staff who desire an affiliation with a teaching institution and the relative assurance of high-quality programming that it provides. Faculty appointments, continuing education activities and opportunities to participate in research and teaching also help to attract competent staff. This theory is relevant to this study because training programme on aggression techniques provides a feeder system for recruiting high quality young professionals into a correctional system that would take care of inmates' health need and aggressive behaviour.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design. The selection of the design was to facilitate the collection of original data necessary to realize the research objectives. The study was carried out in Enugu Correctional Service, located in Enugu State capital city, a short distance away from Enugu North LGA, along Ogbete Road, close to Peace Park and Ogbete Main Market in the South East of Nigeria. The Establishment of a Correctional Service in Enugu could be traced as far back as 1915 during the colonial era to house persons who opposed colonial laws and regulations or crime suspects or criminals. It became a Federal Prison in 1930. The prison was built with a capacity to house a maximum of 635 inmates, both male and females. However, over 2000 inmates are crammed in the facility, resulting to overcrowding and volatile facility. Its aftermath, therefore, is the pathetic and miserable conditions of inmates. The study population comprised the entire correctional health workers and inmates both male and female detained for different crimes in Enugu Correctional Service Centre. The Enugu correctional facility Record Board July 2019 indicates a total population of 2,130 inmates comprising 157 male and 2 female convicted for long and short terms; 1586 male and 37 female awaiting trial; 56 male and 2 female lunatics; 37 male lifers; 241 male and 4 female condemned criminals and 7 male and 1 female lodger respectively. The researcher could not get the entire population of the health officials for clear reasons. The management persistently refused to disclose the number of officials for security reasons in strict conformity with the new directive binding on all military and paramilitary organizations in Nigeria in view of the general nature of insecurity in the country currently.

The actual sample size for this study is 337 inmates. Available correctional health workers on duty were added to this sample during data collection stage since it is difficult to know the entire number of health workers. Convenience sampling technique was adopted in selection of the participants for the study. The health workers on duty at the time of data collection called out ten inmates from the cell block in each session of the interview to be interviewed. This was understandable given that inmates are released in batches from cell blocks – meaning that, inmates cannot be assembled once for interview as experienced during instrument validation.

The instrument for data collection for this study was in-depth interview. Two set of in-depth interviews were conducted. The inmates and correctional health workers were interviewed and their response recorded manually. The researcher chose this instrument because it is the most appropriate for realizing the objective of the study as regards providing rich information on the experiences of prisoners and correctional health workers. The interview guide developed for the study was validated by the research supervisor and criminologist/lecturers who are knowledgeable in prison studies. The instrument was modified and adjusted to reflect their corrections in order to have the content, face and context validity.

The reliability of the interview guide was confirmed with the use of test-retest method, (method of checking the reliability of a test that involves comparing its results at one time with results using the same subject after two weeks) by triangulating the same object (instrument and subjects' respondents). After administering the test instrument to 30 inmates (25 males and 5 females), and 10 health officials the instruments yielding the same information was deemed reliable for the research study. The descriptive statistics such as the demographic characteristics of the respondent were analyzed with the use of simple percentage and data obtained from in-depth interview were transcribed. Information were coded, analyzed and categorized as themes using the three steps (initial/coding, category development and thematic coding) involved in coding qualitative data.

IV. RESULT

Based on the available data, the result of this study was analyzed thus:

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Research Respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics of the research respondents by age showed that all the inmates interviewed in Enugu correctional service are all adults. A significant number (27%) of them fall between the ages of 26 and 35 years; 26% were in the age group of 36-45 years and 18% were also in the age bracket of 46-55 years. It was also discovered that 16% were in the age bracket of 56 years and above. Secondly, that (5%) of

the respondents attended university, while (54%), a greater percentage attended secondary school. (25%) attended primary school and (16%) of the respondents could not acquire any formal education.

The study also indicates that majority (50%) of the inmates in Enugu correctional service were still single, while (33%) were married and 17% divorced. It indicates that 29% were charged for murder, 47% committed arm robbery, and 19% were charged for stealing while 5% were charged for rape.

The study showed that 27% of the correctional health workers falls in the age bracket of 26-35 years, 18% were in the category of 36-45 years and 37% fall in the age group of 46-55 years while 18% also are in the age group of 56 years and above. It also revealed that higher percentage of the correctional health workers, 82% acquired tertiary education while 8% of the officials attended secondary school. It equally revealed the marital status of correctional health workers in Enugu state. The response indicates that greater percentage of the health worker 91% were married while only 9% are single.

Effects of Aggressive Behaviour on Effective Health Care Delivery in Correctional Service

The findings on how aggressive behaviour of correctional health workers affects effective health care delivery in Enugu State correctional service revealed that inmates at times face humiliation in the hands of correctional health workers. A 32-year male inmate on the issue of whether aggressive and humiliating behaviour of correctional health workers affect inmate health needs stated thus: "Health officials at times humiliate inmates simply because of their condition or circumstance they found themselves." Another inmate added that initially when he came to the correctional setting he was harassed by the health workers but with time, after acclimatizing with the environment, the harassment reduced. A 32-year health official asserted that even inmates at times become aggressive, that when such circumstances arise, they do not attend to them even when they are dying except when the inmate comes with a warder to explain after which they are considered and offered treatment. Another health worker attested that the health officials do not attend to inmates alone, that they apply intelligent quotient since they are dealing with criminals even when the inmate try to manipulate or fake ailment.

Discussion of Research Findings

The study observed that inmates in Enugu correctional service are faced with enormous health challenges. The findings revealed that the major challenges faced by inmates include waist pains, malaria, and cough and that they suffer from substance abuse, overcrowding. Others include ulcer, arthritis, and rheumatism. This is in consonance with the study of Schmalenberg and Kramer, (2008), that more common medical conditions faced by all age groups in the prison population included hypertension, asthma, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cervical cancer, depression and hepatitis. They, therefore, implied that inmates suffer various kinds of ailment that need much medical attention from their care-givers (correctional health workers).

It was also revealed that health officials at times humiliate inmates simply because of their condition or circumstance they found themselves. Health officials affirmed that when inmates become aggressive and quarrelsome, they do not attend to them even when they are dying except when the inmate come with a warder or yardmaster to explain, after which they are considered and offered treatment. This is in contrast to the study of Farkas (1999) that despite the punitive sentiment among the public and policymakers, correctional officers still do not express a punitive attitude toward inmates and generally support rehabilitation programmes for inmates. Lastly, the study revealed that inadequate health facility, aggressive behavior, manipulative role conflict, rotation of duties and overcrowding affect effective health delivery to inmates in Enugu correctional service.

4.4 Conclusion

The study observed that inmates in Enugu Correctional Service are faced with enormous health problems ranging from chest pains, infections, cough to arthritis etc and that, health officials, at times, humiliate inmates and the inmates, at times, become quarrelsome. Lastly, that inadequate health facility, aggressive behaviour, manipulative behaviour, role conflict, rotation of duties and overcrowding are known to affect effective health delivery to inmates in Enugu correctional service.

4.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The health section of the correctional service should be equipped with modern health facilities to enable correctional health official perform their duties effectively;
2. The prison administrators should employ more experienced and professional health workers such Psychologist, Social workers, Criminologist and Nurses that are willing to do their work diligently;

3. Continuous training/trainer trainee should be adopted to help the health workers perform effectively, among others.

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APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX II

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INMATES IN ENUGU CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

Preliminaries

A. Introduction:

The researcher and her field assistant exchanged pleasantries with the interviewees, helped them to get relaxed, and then explained to them the purpose of the study.

B. Purpose/ Modus Operandi:

Informed the participant about the topic “Correctional Health Workers Attitudes and Health Needs of Inmates in Correctional Service”; informed the participants that all ideas, comments and suggestions – both positive and negative on the topic – are welcome. Explain to them why it is necessary that we write down their comments (to ensure that you we do not miss any point) and all comments are confidential and for research purpose only.

C. Consent:

May I have your informed consent to continue? Yes () No ()

Section A: Socio-Demographic (characteristics of the interviewees)

1. Please tell me your age?
2. Tell me your level of education?
3. Your marital status?
4. Number of children (if any)?
5. Could you tell me your offences or charges?
6. Your length of serving time?
7. Occupation before incarceration?

Section B: Research Questions/ Specific objective

A.Aggressive Behaviours of Correctional Health Workers

How do aggressive behaviours of correctional health workers affect effective health care delivery to inmates in Enugu correctional service?

- (a) Do health workers publicly humiliate inmates?
- (b) Do workers yell at inmates?
- (c) Do workers use abusive language on inmates?
- (d) Do workers show discriminating attitudes to inmates?
- (e) Do workers express outburst of anger on inmates?
- (f) Do workers threaten inmates?
- (g) Comment.....

APPENDIX 111

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRISON HEALTH WORKERS IN ENUGU CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

Preliminaries

D. Introduction:

The researcher and her field assistant exchanged pleasantries with the interviewees, helped them to get relaxed, and then explained to them the purpose of the study.

E. Purpose/ Modus Operandi:

Informed the participant about the topic "Correctional Health Workers Attitudes and Health Needs of Inmates in Enugu Correctional Service"; informed the participants that all ideas, comments and suggestions – both positive and negative on the topic – are welcome. Explained to them why it is necessary that we write down their comments (to ensure that you we do not miss any point) and all comments are confidential and for research purpose only.

F. Consent:

May I have your informed consent to continue? Yes () No ()

Section A: Socio-Demographic (characteristics of the interviewees)

1. Please tell me your age?
2. Tell me your level of education?
3. Your marital status?
4. Number of children (if any)?

Section B: Research Questions/ Specific Objective

B. Measures to Enhance Effective Attitude to Health Care Services

- a. What measures can enhance effective attitude to health care services to inmates?
- (b) Does provision of adequate health facilities enhance effective attitude to inmates health needs?
- (c) Do good conditions of service enhance health workers attitudes towards health needs of inmates?
- (c) Do continues training of health official enhance effective service delivery to inmates?
- (d) Comment.....

Oketa Chibugo Moses, et. al. "Correctional Health Workers' Aggressive Behaviour and Health Needs of Inmates in Enugu Correctional Service, Enugu State, Nigeria." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 27(09), 2022, pp. 08-16.