



**SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS RISK FACTORS OF
HYPERTENSION IN AKWA IBOM NORTH WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the secondary school teachers' awareness and attitude towards risk factors of hypertension in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was all the 7,846 secondary school teachers in the North West Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. A sample of 512 teachers was selected for the study using the multistage sampling procedure. Data for the study was collected using a researcher made questionnaire entitled "Awareness and Attitude towards Risk Factors of Hypertension Questionnaire (AARFHQ)." The instrument was face validated by five experts. Internal consistency reliability was conducted for the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for the instrument. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Independent t-test and analysis of variance were used to test the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The finding of the study indicated that teachers have high awareness of risk factors of hypertension and a positive attitude towards prevention practices of hypertension. It was concluded that secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District are highly aware of the risk factors of hypertension and show positive attitudes toward its prevention. It was recommended among others that health educators through school authorities should organize regular health education programmes on hypertension for teachers of all ages.

KEYWORDS: Teachers' Awareness, Attitude, Hypertension and Risk Factors

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of hypertension in the country hugely contributes to the overall burden in Africa. In 2023, the WHO estimated hypertension prevalence of 42.8 per cent in Nigeria (WHO, 2024). This is believed to be due to an increase in adult population, rapid urbanization and uptake of western lifestyles, including high consumption of processed foods (with high salts and fats), tobacco and alcohol products. As observed by Oguizu *et al.* (2019), the available nationwide data on the epidemiology of hypertension in Nigeria is based on the non-communicable disease survey published in 1997 which is obsolete and no longer reliable as the threshold for the diagnosis of hypertension was a blood pressure of 160/95 mmHg as against the acceptable current threshold of 140/90 mmHg. One major problem affecting the response to this burden in Nigeria is that the awareness, treatment and control of hypertension have been low (Kayima *et al.*, 2023).

The awareness of risk factors for hypertension is essential for an adult to make an informed decision about preventing the diseases related to hypertension. In order to improve their life condition and prevent themselves from hypertension, people have to be aware of the potential risk factors associated with hypertension and benefits of engaging in lifestyle modification. Low level awareness about hypertension are important factors for not adhering to the preventive measures of hypertension, which can lead to higher rates of uncontrolled blood pressure (Gupta, Gaur and Ram, 2019). Lack of awareness of hypertension can lead to poor attitude towards the risk factors of the disease which may directly affect the attitude towards the preventive measures of hypertension.

Several studies have investigated the attitude towards hypertension in the high-risk population, including the attitude towards diagnostic criteria for hypertension, recognition of the benefit of hypertension prevention and behaviours such as physical activity and vegetable/fruit intake (Gao, 2024). Unfortunately, with the increasing rate of hypertension in the society today



including Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, it is disheartening to say that there seems to be a very low engagement in preventive measures of hypertension in Nigeria. This could have led to the high incidence and prevalence of hypertension-related deaths among both males and females in Nigeria, including secondary school teachers. Could it be that secondary school teachers lack adequate knowledge of risk factors of hypertension? Or could it be that the teachers expose themselves to the risk factors of hypertension and fail to seek medical attention due to their attitude towards hypertension? All these questions lead to the problem of this study. Hence, the researcher found it very necessary to conduct this study with a view to examine the awareness and attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Statement of the Problem

It is observed that teachers in Nigeria particular those in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District are unprepared for the public health challenges like hypertension. Hypertension is related to high occurrences of deaths. There have been myriad cases of “Slumping and dying”, in the offices, on walkways, in the market places, homes and even in the churches. Some of the “slumped” cases had been known to be hypertensive. While others had been informed but refused to accept or believe due to their attitude and superstitious beliefs.

Hypertension is a major public health concern worldwide, including in Nigeria, where its prevalence is rising steadily. In Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, the increasing incidence of hypertension and its associated risk factors, such as unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, stress, and alcohol consumption, posed significant health challenges. Secondary school teachers, being influential members of the community and role models for students, have a crucial responsibility in health education and promotion. However, there is limited information on their level of awareness and attitudes towards these risk factors, which could hinder effective health education efforts within schools and the wider community. This knowledge gap raises concerns about whether teachers are adequately equipped to recognize and address hypertension risk factors, and how their attitudes may influence their capacity to promote healthy behaviors among students. The study was prompted by the need to understand these aspects, especially given the rising burden of hypertension and the vital role teachers can play in prevention strategies.

Efforts to address this issue included conducting surveys to assess teachers’ knowledge and attitudes, organizing health education workshops to improve their understanding, and engaging with local health authorities to support sustainable awareness campaigns. The ultimate goal was to identify gaps and develop targeted interventions that can enhance teachers’ capacity to contribute effectively to hypertension prevention and health promotion in the community. Therefore, the researcher sees this study sought to examine the awareness and attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary schools teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine secondary school teachers’ awareness and attitude towards risk factors of hypertension in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. The study specifically sought to:

1. examine the level of awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.
2. determine the attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the level of awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District?



2. What is the attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and were tested at .05 level of significance:

1. The level of awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is not significant.
2. The attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is not significant.

Literature Review

Concept of Hypertension

High blood pressure is the persistent raised levels of blood pressure in which the systolic pressure is above 140 mmHg and diastolic pressure above 90 mmHg (Ezaby, 2016). It is defined arbitrarily as levels above generally acceptable normal; for example 140 systolic over 90 diastolic with an average of 120 systolic over 80 diastolic (Amadi, *et al*, 2019). High blood pressure is a non-communicable disease that is very common and affects both male and female in all races (WHO, 2020). It is detected when the systolic blood pressure (SBP) is greater than 140 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure (DBF) is greater than 90 mmHg or a combination of both (Bergheanu, Bodde, and Jukeama, 2017). In this study, high blood pressure is referred to as a systolic blood pressure greater than 140mmHg and a diastolic blood pressure greater than 90mmHg. The top number which is the systolic pressure corresponds to the pressure in the arteries as the heart contracts and pumps blood forward into the arteries. Eghbali, *et al.* (2018) explained that hypertension is affected by peripheral resistance, cardiac output and total blood volume.

Awareness of Risk of Factors of Hypertension

The awareness of risk factors associated with hypertension is crucial for early detection, prevention, and control, especially considering the gender-specific differences that influence susceptibility and responsiveness to interventions. Research by Akinbobola *et al.* (2021) indicates that gender differences significantly affect the level of awareness about hypertension and its risk factors. Women, particularly in certain cultural contexts, tend to demonstrate higher health consciousness and are more proactive in seeking medical advice compared to men. This heightened awareness among women can be attributed to increased engagement with healthcare services, reproductive health programs, and health education campaigns targeted at women (Adekunle *et al.*, 2023). The awareness of specific risk factors for hypertension also varies by gender. Common risk factors include obesity, high salt intake, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol consumption, smoking, stress, and genetic predisposition (WHO, 2021). Studies have shown that women are more aware of lifestyle-related risk factors such as diet and physical activity, possibly due to targeted health education and maternal health programs (Adebayo *et al.*, 2022). However, awareness of other modifiable risk factors, such as smoking and alcohol consumption, tends to be higher among men, reflecting gender-specific behaviours and social norms (Ojo *et al.*, 2022). Gender also influences the perception of susceptibility to hypertension.

A study conducted by Onyekwere (2017) ascertain the knowledge of hypertension among adults in Owerri senatorial zone of Imo state, Nigeria. Eight specific objectives were formulated with eight corresponding research questions and four null-hypotheses were also postulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was three hundred and fifty five thousand, four hundred and fifty three adults while the sample for the study consisted of four hundred and thirty two adults. A five sectioned researcher designed questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by five experts from the Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria. Split half method



using Cronbach Alpha statistic was utilized to establish the internal consistency of the instrument and had a reliability index of .76. Percentages using a slightly modified version of Okafor's (1997) of Ashur's (1977) criteria for describing level of knowledge were utilized for answering research questions. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Student t-Test statistic were used to analyze the data obtained and testing of the hypotheses. The results of the study showed that: adults' had high level of knowledge regarding the concept of hypertension; there was moderate level of knowledge regarding the signs and symptoms of hypertension among adults; adults' exhibited high level of knowledge regarding risk factors of hypertension. This study would guide the present study in achieving its stated objective of examining the awareness and attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Adeloye *et al.* (2021) conducted a systematic analysis of current evidence of prevalence, awareness, treatment and control of hypertension in Nigeria in 1995 and 2020. The authors employed random-effects meta-analysis on extracted crude hypertension prevalence, and awareness, treatment, and control rates. Using a meta-regression model, overall hypertension cases in Nigeria in 1995 and 2020 were estimated. Fifty-three studies ($n = 78\,949$) met our selection criteria. Estimated crude prevalence of pre-hypertension (120-139/80-89 mmHg) in Nigeria was 30.9 percent (95% confidence interval [CI]: 22.0%-39.7%), and the crude prevalence of hypertension ($\geq 140/90$ mmHg) was 30.6 percent (95% CI: 27.3%-34.0%). When adjusted for age, study period, and sample, absolute cases of hypertension increased by 540 percent among individuals aged ≥ 20 years from approximately 4.3 million individuals in 1995 (age-adjusted prevalence 8.6%, 95% CI: 6.5-10.7) to 27.5 million individuals with hypertension in 2020 (age-adjusted prevalence 32.5%, 95% CI: 29.8-35.3). The age-adjusted prevalence was only significantly higher among men in 1995, with the gap between both sexes considerably narrowed in 2020. Only 29.0 percent of cases (95% CI: 19.7-38.3) were aware of their hypertension, 12.0 percent (95% CI: 2.7-21.2) were on treatment, and 2.8 percent (95% CI: 0.1-5.7) had at-goal blood pressure in 2020. The study suggests that hypertension prevalence has substantially increased in Nigeria over the last two decades. Although more persons are aware of their hypertension status, clinical treatment and control rates, however, remain low. These estimates are relevant for clinical care, population, and policy response in Nigeria and across Africa. This study would serve as a guide to the present study in achieving its stated objective of examining the awareness and attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Design of the Study

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. This research design is relevant to this study as the researcher was required to undertake a systematic collection, analysis, and presentation of data to give account of the characteristics of particular individuals, groups, or the state of events without the manipulation of data as applicable in experimental studies. This type of research design specifies the nature of a given phenomenon in a population. It gives picture of a situation as it occurs in a given population.

Population of the Study

The target population for the study consisted of all teachers in all the public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District with the total number of 7,846 (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, 2025).

Sample and Sampling Method

A sample size of 512 teachers representing 6.2 percent of the total population was selected for the study using a multistage sampling technique which involved three stages. In the first stage, 40 percent (4 local government areas) were randomly selected for the study. In stage two, 24



secondary schools were randomly selected from the 4 local government areas. In state three, 50 percent of teachers in the 24 schools were randomly selected resulting in 512 teachers. Toss of coin strategy was used in all stages of random sampling. (see Appendix II for sampling frame). This sample size (512 teachers) is adequate because it is far above determination of minimum sample size from population of 355 in Krejcie and Morgan table

Instrumentation

A researcher developed questionnaire, titled “Awareness and Attitude towards Risk Factors of Hypertension Questionnaire (AARFHQ)” was the instrument for data collection in the study. The instrument comprises 42 structured items with four points of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire is divided into six sections namely; A, B, C, D and E. Section A consists of two items dealing with demographic variables (gender and age). Section B comprises ten items on awareness of risk factors of hypertension. Section C consists of ten items on attitude towards risk factors of hypertension. Section D consists of ten items on influence of age on awareness of risk factors of hypertension. Section E consists of ten items on influence of age on attitude towards risk factors of hypertension (see Appendix III for details). The respondents were require to place a thick (√) as it applies to them based on their level of agreement with each items.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collect from the questionnaires were coded, scored, summarized and analyzed statistically using computer software programme called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. The collated data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The research questions was interpreted as follows;

Ethical Issues

An informed consent was obtained from the participants after explaining the purpose of the study to them. The researcher assured the respondents of the confidentiality of the information that was obtained from them. The respondents were free to participate or withdraw from the study. There was no concernment of information from respondents. All data collected were treated anonymously with no violation of individual’s right to fair hearing.

Result

Research Question 1

What is the level of awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean Awareness of Risk Factors of Hypertension among Secondary School Teacher

S/N	AWARENESS OF RISK FACTORS OF HYPERTENSION	Mean	SD	Remark
	I am aware that:			
1.	continuous tension could cause hypertension.	2.94	1.03	High
2.	too much stress can lead to hypertension.	3.72	1.14	Very High
3.	eating too much salt can increase the risk of hypertension.	2.63	1.13	High
4.	elderly people are prone to hypertension.	3.60	1.07	Very High
5.	young people hardly experience hypertension.	2.44	1.12	Moderate
6.	smoking can induce hypertension.	2.62	.54	High
7.	excessive intake of salt can predispose one to hypertension.	2.61	.51	High
8.	weight gain can lead to hypertension.	3.52	.56	Very High



9.	sedentary lifestyle is a leading cause of hypertension.	2.68	1.16	High
10.	eating food with high cholesterol content can lead to hypertension.	2.85	1.14	High
11.	being obese increases the risk of developing hypertension.	3.67	1.13	Very High
12.	smoking cigarettes can raise blood pressure and harm heart health.	2.81	1.10	High
13.	eating foods high in sugar can contribute to hypertension.	3.72	1.16	Very High
14.	lifestyle modifications are key strategies for preventing hypertension.	3.74	1.14	Very High
15.	regular blood pressure monitoring is essential for early detection.	2.92	1.13	High
16.	alcohol moderation is important for maintaining healthy blood pressure.	2.94	1.03	High
17.	high cholesterol levels are associated with hypertension.	3.72	1.14	Very High
18.	high caffeine intake may temporarily increase blood pressure.	2.63	1.13	High
19.	certain medications can affect blood pressure.	3.60	1.07	Very High
20.	lack of sleep can negatively impact blood pressure levels.	2.44	1.12	Moderate
Grand Mean		2.90		High

The result in Table 1 shows the mean awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 2.90 indicated a high mean awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean Attitude towards Risk factors of Hypertension among Secondary School Teachers

S/N	ATTITUDE TOWARDS RISK FACTORS OF HYPERTENSION	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	I always avoid excess intake of alcohol because it can cause hypertension.	2.62	.54	High
2.	I believe that lack of physical activity elevate blood pressure.	2.61	.51	High
3.	I always make sure that I eat food with low content of cholesterols	3.52	.56	Very High
4.	I usually watch my weight because I don't want to have hypertension.	2.68	1.16	High
5.	I always avoid stress in order to keep myself away from hypertension.	2.85	1.14	High
6.	I cannot inherit hypertension from parents.	3.67	1.13	Very High
7.	I believe that reducing salt intake is crucial for preventing high blood pressure.	2.81	1.10	High
8.	I always watch what I consumed because I don't want to have hypertension.	3.72	1.16	Very High
9.	I always finding time to rest to prevent myself from hypertension.	3.74	1.14	Very High
10.	I don't believe that old age can lead to hypertension.	2.92	1.13	High
11.	I think that regular exercise plays a key role in maintaining healthy blood pressure levels.	2.62	.54	High
12.	I feel that drinking alcohol excessively can increase the risk of hypertension.	2.61	.51	High
13.	Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables can help me lower the chances of high blood pressure.	3.52	.56	Very High
14.	I am at risk of hypertension if I consume processed foods high in preservatives.	2.68	1.16	High



15.	Living a sedentary lifestyle increases my risk of developing hypertension.	2.85	1.14	High
16.	Limiting salt in my diet is an effective way to control my blood pressure.	3.67	1.13	Very High
17.	I always avoid eating foods high in sugar regularly as it can leads to the risk of developing hypertension.	2.81	1.10	High
18.	I believe that having high cholesterol levels can contribute to the development of hypertension.	3.72	1.16	Very High
19.	I believe that emotional stress without proper management can lead to hypertension.	3.74	1.14	Very High
20.	I strongly believe that managing stress effectively can help keep blood pressure under control.	2.92	1.13	High
Grand Mean		3.11		High

The result in Table 2 shows the mean attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 3.11 indicated a high positive attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is not significant.

Table 3: Independent t-test Analysis of the Difference in Awareness of Risk Factors of Hypertension among Male and Female Secondary School Teachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	df	p-value
Male	171	61.32	15.86	1.44	501	.149
Female	332	63.35	14.58			

The result in Table 3 shows that the t-value of 1.44 for the difference in the awareness of risk factors of hypertension among male and female secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is not significant. This is because the p-value of .149 is greater than .05 level of significance at 501 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is not significant is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 There is no significant difference in attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among male and female secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Table 4: Independent t-test Analysis of the Difference in Attitude towards Risk Factors of Hypertension among Male and Female Secondary School Teachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	df	p-value
Male	171	59.54	7.23	3.47	501	.001
Female	332	57.22	7.02			

The result in Table 4 shows that the t-value of 3.47 for the difference in attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among male and female secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is significant. This is because the p-value of .001 is less than .05 level of significance at 501 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the awareness of risk factors of hypertension among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District is rejected. Hence, there is significant



difference in attitude towards risk factors of hypertension among male and female secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District have a high level of awareness of the risk factors of hypertension. This result is not surprising, given that teachers are generally well-educated and often have greater access to health information through formal education, seminars, and community health campaigns. As educated members of society, teachers are usually more exposed to health knowledge that enables them to recognize lifestyle factors such as poor diet, obesity, stress, lack of exercise, and excessive alcohol consumption as contributors to hypertension. Another possible reason for this high awareness is the increasing media and public health campaigns in Nigeria focusing on non-communicable diseases. Radio, television, and social media platforms often carry programs that highlight the dangers of high blood pressure, which might have contributed to improving teachers' understanding. Additionally, teachers often act as role models and health informants within their communities, which may motivate them to keep themselves informed about common health conditions like hypertension. This finding is in line with earlier studies. For instance, Onyekwere (2017) reported that adults in Owerri Senatorial Zone of Imo State had a high level of knowledge regarding risk factors of hypertension, supporting the idea that educated populations tend to be more aware of such health issues. Similarly, Baharudin *et al.* (2021) found that a majority of Malaysian adults were knowledgeable about the effects of high salt intake on blood pressure, showing that awareness of hypertension risk factors is relatively high among educated groups globally. Adeloye *et al.* (2021) also confirmed that more Nigerians have become aware of their hypertension status in recent years, even though treatment and control remain low.

The study revealed that teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District have a positive attitude towards the risk factors of hypertension. This suggests that teachers not only recognize the dangers of hypertension but also show willingness to adopt healthy lifestyles that can reduce its occurrence. Being educated, many teachers understand the value of preventive measures such as regular exercise, reducing salt intake, managing stress, and avoiding excessive alcohol and tobacco use. Their role as educators and community influencers may also encourage them to cultivate health-conscious behaviors that set good examples for their students and peers. A possible reason for this positive attitude is the growing exposure to health education campaigns and medical outreach programs that emphasize lifestyle modification as a way to prevent hypertension. Teachers are also likely to interact with health professionals during school health programs, which may shape their attitudes. This finding agrees with earlier studies. For instance, Doffa (2023) found that a majority of clients in Ethiopia had favorable attitudes towards lifestyle modification to prevent hypertension. Similarly, Baharudin *et al.* (2021) in Malaysia observed that many adults showed positive attitudes by deliberately reducing their salt intake after learning its link to high blood pressure. Gamage and Seneviratne (2021) also confirmed that awareness of physical activity's role in hypertension prevention shaped workers' attitudes, even though practice levels were lower.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District are highly aware of the risk factors of hypertension and show positive attitudes toward its prevention. Female teachers were more aware, while male and older teachers showed more positive attitudes. Younger teachers were more knowledgeable but less positive in attitude. These differences suggest that awareness does not always translate into practice. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:



- i) Health educators through school authorities should organize regular health education programs on hypertension for teachers of all ages'**
- ii) The government through the ministry of education should organized seminars and training, emphasizing lifestyle modification and preventive practices for teachers of all age groups.**

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