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Leprosy and medical practitioners in Enugu, Southern NigeriaOmotowo I Babatunde¹, Chukwu J N² and Otache A E¹¹University of Nigeria, Nigeria²German Leprosy and Tuberculosis Relief Association, Nigeria

Introduction: Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease that is associated with serious morbidity and is a disease of public health concern because of the social stigma. Knowledge, attitudes and practices of medical practitioners is vital in the control.

Objective: The aim of the study was to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of medical officers and interns regarding leprosy disease.

Methods: This cross sectional study was conducted among medical officers and interns in University of Nigeria teaching Hospital and Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, both in Enugu. Data was collected using a self reported questionnaire on the knowledge, attitude and practices towards Leprosy. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 21 and statistical significance of association between variables was assessed using Chi-square test at $p < 0.05$. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committees of both health facilities.

Results: All the 26 medical officers and 262 interns returned the completed questionnaires. In the study, interns showed higher knowledge 78.2% than medical officers 60.4%. Knowledge of the respondents on diagnosis, management and prevention of leprosy was adequate. However, their overall attitudes and practices towards leprosy were poor. 50% of them would not eat, 79.9% would not marry and 34.7% of them would not agree to perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to persons affected by leprosy. Only 33.3% would like to work in any leprosy referral hospital, while 5.1% would not agree to be admitted in the same hospital with persons affected by leprosy and 31.3% would like to isolate people affected with leprosy from the general community. Agree to perform CPR and category of profession relationship was not statistically significant ($X^2=8.296$, $df=4$, $p=0.081$), but the relationship with the age of the participants was significant ($X^2=17.111$, $df=8$, $p=0.029$).

Conclusion: The study revealed there is adequate knowledge among medical officers and interns with regards to leprosy in the two hospitals. However, their attitudes and practices are poor. There is need to organize training programs at regular intervals for interns and medical officers in out-patients departments.

Biography

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