

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

"He Does his own and Walks Away" Perceptions About Male Attitudes and Practices Regarding Safe Motherhood in Ekiadolor, Southern Nigeria

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Abstract

The main *study objectives* were to highlight male attitudes and practices regarding safe motherhood, and to demonstrate the usefulness of qualitative research methods in studying behaviour-related health problems. The *setting* was Ekiadolor, a semi-urban Nigerian community with an under-resourced district hospital. The *study design* was a qualitative research, using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with females and the local hospital staff as participants, triangulated with Free Listing Interviews (FLIs) and group interviews of males. The FGD *findings* showed a consensus that male practices and attitudes were generally unsatisfactory, as exemplified by physical violence against females, delay in enabling access to emergency obstetric care and a general perception that males were uncaring. However, many males paid parts of their partners' routine obstetric care bills. These findings were largely corroborated and enriched by those of the FLIs and group interviews, albeit with differing emphases; they provided vital inputs into health education of the community males. In *conclusion*, the wide range of attitudes and practices described, and the socioeconomic settings in which they occur, pose challenges and opportunities for behaviour change interventions primarily targeting males, poverty reduction and health service reforms. Health researchers are challenged to draw from the varied strengths of qualitative research methods.

Keywords: *Safe motherhood; male attitudes and practices; Focus Group Discussion; Free Listing Interview; Nigeria*

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