

ATTITUDE OF NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TO CHILDREN WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

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Introduction: Teachers are potential partners in the referral and management of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) especially in resource constrained settings. However, their ability to play this role is a function of their knowledge of ADHD and their attitude towards children with the disorder. There is paucity of information on the attitude of Nigerian school teachers towards children with ADHD.

Objective/aim: This study assessed the attitude of a sample of primary school teachers in Lagos, Nigeria towards children with ADHD.

Method: Primary school teachers (n=144) recruited from four mainstream schools in Lagos State were presented with vignettes describing school children with ADHD. Thereafter, they completed questionnaires which elicited their knowledge of ADHD and attitudes towards children with the disorder.

Results: The responses of the participants indicated a high level of misperception about ADHD and negative attitudes towards children with the disorder. Only 9.0% and 16.7% of the respondents agreed that ADHD could be successfully managed with medications and psychological interventions respectively. One out of four (25.7%) teachers affirmed that they would avoid relating with a child with ADHD, while 35.4% would be unwilling to accept a student with ADHD in their class.

Conclusion: There is a high level of misperception about ADHD among Primary school teachers in Nigeria. This highlights the need for educational Interventions targeted towards improving the knowledge of teachers about ADHD. Furthermore, mental health literacy could be incorporated into the curriculum of institutions training primary school teachers.