

AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION ON MDGS AMONG CLINICAL STUDENTS OF BINGHAM UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, JOS

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 Heads of State and Governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 with the aim of attaining these goals by the year 2015. The aim of the study is to determine the awareness, knowledge and perception on MDGs among clinical medical students of Bingham University Teaching Hospital, Jos.

Methods: The sampling method was consecutive sampling of all the students until sample size was obtained. A total of 173 questionnaires were distributed and 171 were duly filled and returned.

Results: Analysis of the results obtained showed that about 90% of the students are aware of MDGs, Majority of the students heard about the MDGs by surfing the internet (59%), followed by information from television set (21%). The results from their responses showed that majority of them disagree that Nigerians felt the impact of MDGs (52%, disagree and 15%, strongly disagree). The knowledge on MDGs was good in some indicators. The highest knowledge was on the education, environment and gender equality, with 60%, 54% and 40% respectively knowing that the MDGs had indicators on these. However, on health only 18% knew the correct number of indicators that were centered on health.

Conclusion: There will be need to educate the universities students on MDGs, so as to have a greater impact on the ongoing SDGs.

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 Heads of State and Governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 with the aim of attaining these goals by the year 2015.¹ In September 2000, at the Millennium Summit, the world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, which committed the nations of the world to a new global partnership, aimed at reducing extreme poverty and other time-bound targets, with a stated deadline of 2015.² This eight goal initiative was planned to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, while aiming to achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.³

Nashash et al,⁴ argues that for MDGs to be achieved "grassroots are required before demand, where people must first be aware of the MDGs and work with them to demand their fulfillment from their governments". The implication of this is that awareness can be linked to possible achievement of MDGs. Adegboye, et al,⁵ in 2011 did a multi-centered cross-sectional study in University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, (IUTH), Federal medical Centre (FMC), Bida and Federal Medical Centre, Yola on: Millennium development goals— Knowledge and attainability as perceived by doctors: The awareness of doctors in the three health centers about MDGs is significantly low. The largest number of respondents who had heard of the acronym "MDG" before the study (90, 62.5%) Only 77 (42%) of the total respondents knew the number of the goals to be eight, It is therefore not surprising that only 8.3% of the respondents believed that the MDGs are very achievable.

Ogbodo et al,⁶ in his study to obtain the level of awareness of MDGs in a rural and urban community got the level of awareness to be 76% and the level of knowledge on MDGs to be 61% which is much higher than that gotten by Adegboye et al,⁵ that was done among doctors. However it is of note that the way the questionnaires were framed are different, the study done by Adegboye et al,⁵ tried to remove bias and used the acronym "MDGs" in the questionnaires to deliberately prevent suggestive questions, while that done by Ogbodo et al,⁶ asked if they have heard of the Millennium development goals directly, with an option of yes or no, there was no room to test if they actually have heard of it, by them providing the full meaning of MDGs. The level of knowledge was also tested based on a yes or no basis which left no room for proper assessment and a true test of the depth of knowledge, by asking questions on the indicators, targets or even when it was launched like what adegboye et al,⁵ did in their questionnaires.

Nashash et al,⁴ also found the awareness of the Millennium Development Goals among students of Princess Alia University College Jordan to be generally low. Although it was not clear from the results the types of questions asked and the type of data generated, the analysis using a t-test showed that there was a low awareness of the MDGs among the students.

The impact of MDGs program has been perceived as generally low by some surveys. In the study done by Ogbodo et al,⁶ 45.5% of the respondents rated the level of implementation of MDGs in Nigeria as very low as against 17.9% which rated the implementation as very high. On the other hand, 36.5% could not take a stand on the implementation of MDGs in Nigeria. According to the UN report in 2015, about two third of the world population who are extremely poor lived in just five countries in

2011: India, Nigeria, China, Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.³ Nigeria contributed significantly to more than 42,000 people who were forced to become refugees and seek protection due to armed conflicts in 2014.³ In 2013, of the 2.1 million new HIV infections, 75% occurred in just 15 countries with Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda accounting for about 50% of them all.³ Nigeria also has one of the lowest numbers of children sleeping under the mosquito nets, in a comparison of surveys among nations of the world.³ Nigeria ranks 118 of 134 countries in the gender equality Index.⁷ According to the UKaid Report, women make up only 21% of the non-agricultural paid labour force. Gender inequality is a major problem in the educational system, with low representation of girls as they move up in the education ladder, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria where girl-child education is still an issue.⁶ In contrast to what is happening in Nigeria: there was a decline in the total number of people living in extreme poverty by more than 50%, from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015; primary school enrolment rate has increased and the number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000 across the world.³ There are more girls in school now leading to a significant improvement in gender equality with empowerment of women, more women are in paid employment and many more women are now in government around the world. Global under-five year mortality rate has declined by more than 50%, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015.³ Maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45 per cent worldwide since 1990 with an improvement in contraceptive use. and new malaria and HIV cases have declined, with new HIV infections falling by approximately 40 percent

between 2000 and 2013, from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million.³

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most underdeveloped region despite the achievements of the MDGs in other continents of the world.⁸ The reasons why Nigeria failed in achieving the MDGs could be explained by inadequate and unreliable data systems, inadequate funding, poor access to primary healthcare delivery systems, lack of human capacity for implementation, incessant strikes in the health sector, high cost of healthcare, and indiscipline with corruption are the challenges facing the proper implementation of MDGs in Nigeria by Ajiye et al.⁹ Olabode KT et al,¹⁰ also highlighted on poverty as one of the major reasons why Nigeria failed to implement the MDGs. The government has been supportive since the inception of MDG, with release of funds and the creation of the office of the senior special adviser to the presidents on MDG. However, it is unclear given the data available whether there has been any real impact on achieving the targets set or whether Nigeria's engagement has instead been dominated by political signaling.¹¹

The MDGs program ended three years ago with plans of building on the existing frame work to achieve the SDGs. Discussion has been ongoing on how link post-MDG targets with SDGs.^{12,13,14} The SDGs seeks to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs, to achieve this there is need to revisit the uncompleted missions related to MDGs.¹⁵ The nature of the MDGs and SDGs requires a multi-sectorial collaboration approach for effective service delivery.¹⁵ Education is considered to be the core aspect for achieving a better life, it is centered on sustainable development, which empowers people to get out of poverty, improves their living conditions, and acts as an instrument for social mobility through gaining knowledge, experience

and skills that empower individuals to seek better more informed options thus make better decisions.^{4,16} The UNDP established an initiative with Cairo University to assess students' awareness of the Millennium Development Goals, by conducting surveys among the university students. They divide the initiative into two components: the first is to raise students' awareness and the second to promote MDGs related research.¹⁷ The UN also launched the "Teach Ins" initiative to teach on the importance of the Millennium Development Goals for all institutions in Lebanon. The UN officials and staff members spoke in all the different regions of Lebanon, in their schools and universities, raising awareness on MDGs and the work being done to achieve them.¹⁸

Methods and Materials

The study was a cross-sectional descriptive study. A self-designed semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the students who fulfilled the criteria and consented to the study. The sampling method

was consecutive sampling of all the students until sample size was obtained. The proposal for this study was approved by the Ethical committee of the Teaching Hospital. A total of 173 questionnaires were administered but 2 of them were not properly filled, so a total of 171 questionnaires were analyzed.

The data was entered into SPSS statistical package version 20 and analyzed. Frequency tables and charts were drawn to show the awareness, knowledge and perception of the students.

Results

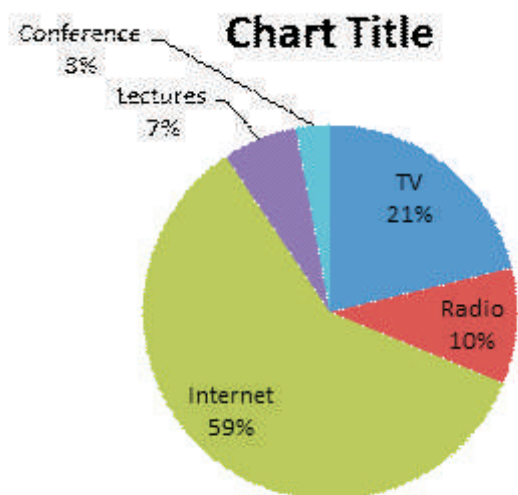
One hundred and seventy-one students were enrolled into the study. There were 102 (59.60%) females and 69 (40.35%) males with M: F ratio of 1:1.48. A total of 154 (90.06%) are aware of MDGs while 17 (9.54%) have not heard about MDGs. The difference was not statistically significant with a p value of 0.94.

Table 1. Distribution of have you heard of MDGs by sex

	Female	Male	
Have you heard of MDGs	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Total (%)
Yes	92(90.20)	62(89.86)	154(90.06)
No	10(9.80)	7(10.14)	17(9.94)
Total	102(59.65)	69(40.35)	171(100)

Chi=0.0053 p= 0.94

The major sources of information about MDGs was from the internet with 101 (59.06%), Television 36 (21.05%). The least was from conferences with 5 (2.92%).



The highest percentage on knowledge about the MDGs was on knowing the full meaning of MDGs 145 (84.4%), knowing that there are goals on education 103 (60.23%), environment 93(54.39%), gender equality 69 (40.39%). The least knowledge were on the number of indicators, targets and countries who signed the agreement, 5 (2.92%), 15 (8.77%), and 7 (4.07%) respectively.

Fig. 1 Sources of information about MDGs

Table 2. Knowledge about MDGs

	Correct	Wrong	I don't know
Knowledge	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Meaning of MDGs	145(84.80)	9(5.26)	17(9.94)
The year it was launched	58(33.92)	11(6.43)	102(59.65)
The year it ended	47(27.49)	18(10.52)	106(38.01)
How long it lasted	36(21.05)	16(9.35)	119(69.59)
How many goals	62(36.26)	13(7.60)	96(56.14)
How many targets	15(8.77)	25(15.79)	129(75.44)
How many indicators	5(2.92)	9(5.26)	157(91.81)
How many countries signed agreement	7(4.09)	13(7.60)	151(88.38)
How many goals on health	31(18.13)	19(11.06)	121(70.78)
Any goals on environment <input type="checkbox"/>	93(54.39)	2(1.17)	76(44.44)
Any goals on education <input type="checkbox"/>	103(60.23)	0(0.00)	68(39.77)
Any goals on gender equality	69(40.35)	10(5.85)	92(53.80)
Did Nigeria Government release any funds for MDGs	48(28.07)	8(4.68)	115(67.25)

Impart of MDGs in Nigeria was perceived to be poor by 116 (67.84%) and good by 55 (32.16%).

Table 3. The impart of MDGs was felt by Nigerians

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Impact	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	26(15.20)	90(52.65)	52(30.41)	3(1.75)
No	145(84.80)	81(47.95)	119(69.59)	168(98.25)

One hundred and forty-five (84.79%) of the students taught that the MDGs program was not successful, while only 26 (15.21%) believed it was successful.

Table 4. MDGs was successful in Nigeria

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Impact	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	32(18.71)	113(66.08)	20(11.17)	6(3.51)
No	139(81.29)	58(34.50)	151(88.30)	165(96.49)

About 145 (85%) disagree about the awareness of MDGs in Nigeria being good while 26 (15%) agreed that the awareness was good.

Table 5. The awareness of MDGs in Nigeria was good

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Impact	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	46(26.90)	99(57.80)	25(14.62)	1(0.58)
No	125(74.27)	72(43.27)	146(85.38)	170(99.42)

Thirty-seven (21.64%) Of the students did not want to be taught about the MDGs, while 134 (78.37%) would want to be taught about MDGs.

Table 6. MDGs should be taught in schools

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Impact	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	13(7.60)	24(14.04)	87(50.88)	47(27.49)
No	158(92.40)	147(85.96)	84(49.12)	124(75.51)

Of the 171 students, 44 (25.73%) disagreed about having the knowledge about MDGs helping them play their part in the fulfillment of MDGs, while 127 (74.27%) agreed that having the knowledge about MDGs would have helped them in playing the part in the fulfillment of MDGs.

Table 7. I would have done my part to the fulfillment of MDGs if I had the knowledge

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Impact	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	6(3.51)	38(22.22)	112(65.50)	15(8.77)
No	165(96.49)	133(77.78)	59(34.50)	156(91.23)

Discussion

The awareness about MDGs was good with almost 90% of the students having heard about MDGs, this could be because they are in the university and have a quest for knowledge, this is higher than what Adegboye et al,⁵ who did a multi-centered study got in 2011 among medical doctors, where he got the level of awareness to be about 63%. A plausible explanation could be because of the difference in the timing, the awareness could have improved over the years, from 2011 to 2018.

The major source of information was from the internet, this could be because only the 600L students have had their tutorial on MDGs and

therefore most of the students got their information via the internet since they have access to the internet through their smartphones.

The knowledge on the full meaning of MDGs was good, they also had good knowledge on what some of the indicators were about, and these include education and environment. The knowledge on whether there were indicators on gender equality was fair. However, the knowledge on the number of goals, targets, the year it was launched, how long it lasted and when it ended were poor. In fact, the knowledge on the number of goals on health was very poor. This could be because not all the students have had a tutorial on MDGs and the knowledge

acquired from the internet might not be enough. This is comparable to the results gotten by Adegboye et al,⁵ where the knowledge on the number of goals was 42%, listing at least 4 of the goals (36%) and the year it will end (33%).

The perception of the students on the impact of MDGs in Nigeria was that it was very poor, as about 68% of them disagree about the impact being good; they also believed that it was not successful with over 70% of them disagreeing about the program being successful. The awareness of MDGs generally among Nigerians was believed to be poor, over 80% of them disagreed about the awareness being good. A plausible explanation could have been because their knowledge about the MDGs was poor with only about 28% of them being aware that funds were released by the Federal government of Nigeria in the pursuit of the fulfillment of the MDGs. The results is similar to the results gotten by different studies done by Adegboye et al,⁵ Ogbodo et al,⁶ Olabode et al,¹⁰ Sachs et al,¹⁹ and Ajiye et al,³ in Nigeria, another study done by Nashash Hyash in Jordan also showed that that the perception about the impact of MDGs was poor. Marta Lomazzi et al,²⁰ observed that it will be difficult for poor countries to meet the MDGs because of our challenges like economic crisis and lack of synergy among the goals.

Conclusion

There is the need to make the students not only aware about the MDGs, but to educate and increase their knowledge and perception about it, so as to help them understand their roles in the fulfillment of the ongoing SDGs.

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