# CHALLENGES OF ACCESSING AND UTILISING HEALTH INFORMATION FOR INFORMATION NEEDS SATISFACTION OF FEMALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF MEDICINE

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#### **Abstract**

The study examined the challenges of accessing and utilizing health information for the information needs satisfaction of female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine. The study was guided by three research questions and one null hypothesis. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 1,339 registered female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine. The sample size of the study was 549 female undergraduates' students representing 41% of the population. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found out that, female undergraduate students understand that accessing and utilizing health information for meeting their information needs satisfaction has lots of benefits. However, challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information are: health information not packaged in an appealing/attracting format, lack of health counselors for students, negative attitudes of library staff members are a major problem and cultural or religious constraints, physical accessibility to the library building is a concern, lack of organize seminars/workshops on reproductive health, and epileptic power supply

to access electronic health information, lack of ICT facilities to access health information, lack of current and up-to-date health information in the library. Some of the solutions to the problems include: the managements of the colleges of medicine should allocate more fund to the colleges of medicine library to acquire more health information resources for the female undergraduate students so that they can access and utilize them to meet their health information needs.

**Keywords:** Accessibility, Utilization, Health Information, Challenges, Female undergraduate students

#### Introduction

College of medicine libraries are usually situated in universities and it is a place where students of higher learning particularly the female access their health information. By offering access to a collection that is broad enough to meet the interests of different users, the college of medicine libraries plays an important role as a vehicle of formal and informal education. Beyond that, the library greases the wheels of knowledge by facilitating easier and more efficient access to human records, allowing users to use what they discover to better themselves and their communities (Abubakar, Daniel, & Idris, 2020). These libraries makes knowledge available and accessible to all users, regardless of their age, gender, color, political affiliation, given its crucial function as a catalyst for societal reform; they are mainly to provide open accessibility to information on different aspect of life, like on employment, education, health, societal service, religion, economy, politics, and agricultural information (Adeleke & Makinde, 2022). Finding the health and scientific resources to enhance, modernize, study, and assess healthcare, is made easier with the aid of college of medicine libraries, which are organized to assist everyone including medical doctors, medical researchers, their patients, the students, and information professionals.

Access to reproductive health information (RHI) encompasses the entire provision and utilization of retrieval-based information services offered in the college of medicine libraries. According to Mathiesen (2014), accessibility to information occurs when one has the opportunity or chance to receive, use, and benefit from the information. Undergraduate students are an important component of achieving SDG 3 on health and wellbeing, and they are the focus of this study. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2015), female students had poorer accessibility to sexual, and health information, and risk factors for noncommunicable illnesses (NCDs) like alcohol abuse, poor diets, and insufficient exercise are behaviours that begins at the early stage. Access to health

information should be available and accessible in the college of medicine libraries to assist undergraduate students in deciding who to visit, where to go, and what type of care they require. One strategy for improving health issues is to provide timely, and relevant sexual reproductive health information (SRHI) to young people, which include university students (Melaku, 2014). Nwachukwu *et al.* (2014) defined accessibility broadly as the extent to which a system is usable by as many users as possible. The rationale behind the study is to, examine the challenges of accessing and utilizing health information for information needs satisfaction of female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine which will result to improved reproductive wellbeing.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- 1. find out the extent to which health information accessibility and utilization improved reproductive wellbeing of female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine,
- 2. identify the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information for information needs satisfaction by female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine,
- **3.** proffer strategies to improve access and utilization of health information for information needs satisfaction among female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine.

## **Hypothesis**

A null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho<sup>1</sup>. There is no significance difference in the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information by female undergraduate students across the colleges of medicine.

#### **Literature Review**

College of medicine library is a company tasked with gathering, compiling, storing, retrieving, and providing users with access to information resources. It is a collection of informational resources and the place where these resources are stored for access. College of medicine library must provide the availability and accessibility of information resources, since it is a crucial service. These libraries provide resources to university personnel, faculty, and students while also promoting information literacy. Therefore, in order for the needs of the institutions to be met as well as those of their users, academic librarians; and

information professionals must balance specific research; and information needs with a functional collections of information resources, all the while taking the institution's subject specifics into consideration. A college of medicine library is founded by the university and receive supports and finances, through the federal or state government. Through a range of tools and services, it provides undergraduate students with equal accessibility to knowledge, creative works, and information not withstanding their age, color, nationality, religion, gender, language, handicap, financial position, job status; or educational attainment (Mbitsa, 2019). Due to its openness to all users and broad reputation, the college is sometimes referred to as the people's university of medicine libraries (Okeoma, 2015). College of medicine library is an institution where the students, staff and the general public can freely and without restriction access organized collections of information resources. They play a crucial role in promoting education, literacy, lifelong learning, health, cultural enrichment, and community engagement and are designed to meet the informational, cultural, and educational needs of people.

All female students are expected to access and utilized reproductive health information most especially the ones in colleges of medicine who are expected to make adequate use of the available health information and then pass it to their female counterpart in other faculties. Normally, childbearing age is a healthy period of life, but many females have died as a result of health issues such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and unplanned pregnancies, that frequently result in obstetrical complications, or unsecure abortion; however, some female students are less informed and experienced (Gamalat, Amany, & Ahmed, 2019). This is a huge public health concern, particularly for undergraduate students in Nigeria, most especially in the North Central region. It is however critical to equip the students with this crucial knowledge to help them to cope with all the conditions that make them volatile. Singh, Rai, and Singh (2014) found that 225 million women in the developing world, particularly in Nigeria, had unmet needs for modern contraceptive procedures. Women who desire to put off or delay having children but are not using contemporary contraceptive methods are referred to as having an unmet need. Similarly, Guttmacher Institute (2017) calculated that, out of the annual 210 million conceptions nation-wide, only 80 million which is (38%) were unwanted and 46 million (22%) were usually aborted. National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS, 2020), reported that maternal mortality rate (MMR) in Nigeria amount to 576 in every 100,000 live births; in accordance to the report, poor health information, and services is the major cause and this leads to about 10% of global

health burden. Moreover, the report added that fertility rate is recorded at 5.5 per woman in 2013.

The United Nations (UN) recognizes the importance of health, and the right of all students to make logical health decisions; advancement of health and rights a main priority, and to worked to confront the problems to health information and services through various initiatives and programs. The Organization established numerous global goals and targets for health and rights, including improving accessibility to family planning information, and services, lowering maternal mortality, and providing universal accessibility to sexual, and health care services. They have also highlighted and addressed health and rights through numerous projects and programs, such as Sustainable, Development Goals (SDGs), which were approved in 2015 and contain a target to ensure general access to sexual, and health care services. The United Nations emphasizes the importance of health information, and accessibility to health services for individuals, particularly the female undergraduate students, and has made it a priority to address the challenges and improve access to these resources at the global level. However, considering the unmet Millennium development goals (MDGs), new strategy has been devised using SDGs which is hoped to be achieved by member nations by 2030.

However, if female undergraduate students could access and utilize health resources and high-quality services, especially when problems emerge, health challenges might be avoided or reduced to the barest minimum. Nevertheless, in practice, most female students face significant obstacles when trying to get services, and even when they do, the services themselves are frequently of poor quality or ineffectiveness. Moreover, sector-wide programs for skilled attendance in recent years have sought to both increase supply and create demand (Odetola, 2015). The fundamental importance of health information to the society wellbeing is so much to be desired. According to WHO statistics for 2022, Nigeria contributes for more than 34% of global maternal deaths, by the risk of Nigerian woman's lifetime dying during conception, postpartum, childbirth, and or after an abortion being 1 in 22, in contrast to 1 in 4900 in industrialized countries. Health organization sees the importance of health information, accessing quality health services for female students of childbearing age and the role of information and education in promoting health; they thereby provide educational materials and works to improve the accessibility and utilization of health information, with a focus on reaching vulnerable and marginalized populations. They seek for incorporation of health into overall health-care, and works to ensure that undergraduate students have accessibility to the information, and services they

need to make knowledgeable decisions on their health. This includes access to prenatal care, family planning services, and safe delivery services. These help women to do away with problems of unintended births, unsecure abortions, and issues that relate to pregnancy (Women Health West, 2022).

## Methodology

The study used descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 1,339 registered female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine, North Central, Nigeria. The sampling size of this study is 549 female undergraduates of colleges of medicine, in Northern Nigeria, representing 41% of population. The instrument used for collecting data is questionnaire. Closed-ended structured questionnaire, was designed by the researcher to gather data. A total of 549 copies of questionnaires were distributed to sampled respondents, out of which 531 copies representing 96.7% were completely filled and returned, hence used for the data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. The replies to the research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data.

## **Result and Findings**

1: To what extent does health information accessibility and utilization improve reproductive wellbeing of female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine?

Table 1: Mean Response on the extent to which health information accessibility and utilization improved reproductive wellbeing of female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	St.D	Remark	Rank
	statement								
1	Better	435	47	18	31			VHE	1 <sup>st</sup>
	understanding of sexual					3.67	0.80		
	health								
2	Improved	395	105	14	17			VHE	$2^{nd}$
	access to					3.65	0.69		
	healthcare services								
3	Enhanced	373	127	31	0	3.64	0.59	VHE	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	good fertility								, +lb
4	Improved	405	61	50	15	3.61	0.77	VHE	4 <sup>th</sup>
				27	_				

	menstrual health management								
5	Improved	368	130	19	14			VHE	5 <sup>th</sup>
	reproductive health					3.60	0.69		
6	practices	222	1.4.6	25	17			MILE	6 <sup>th</sup>
6	Changed reproductive	333	146	35	17	2.50	0.76	VHE	0
	health					3.50	0.76		
7	behavior Better	296	205	16	14			HE	$7^{\mathrm{th}}$
	management								
	of reproductive					a	0.10		
	health					3.47	0.68		
	conditions (PCOS,								
	endometriosis)								.1
8	Increased use of	353	90	49	39	3.43	0.93	HE	8 <sup>th</sup>
	contraceptives					3.43	0.73		
9	Empowered to make informed	267	202	46	16			HE	9 <sup>th</sup>
	decisions					3.36	0.76		
	about my reproductive					3.30	0.70		
	life								
10	Increased	255	230	46	0			HE	10 <sup>th</sup>
	frequency of gynaecological					3.31	0.86		
	check-ups					2.52	0.75	X/1112	
	Grand Mean					3.52	0.75	VHE	

Results in Table 1 shows the response on the extent to which health information accessibility and utilization improved reproductive wellbeing of female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine in North central, Nigeria. From the results; the health information accessibility and utilization of health

information contributes to improved reproductive wellbeing of female undergraduate students of colleges through better understanding of sexual health, with 3.67 mean score; improved access to healthcare services, with 3.65 mean score; enhanced good fertility, with 3.64 mean score; improved menstrual health management, with 3.61 mean score; improved reproductive health practices, with 3.60 mean score; and changed reproductive health behavior, with 3.50 mean score to a very high extent. The least is increased frequency of gynecological checkups, with 3.31 mean score. The grand mean of 3.52 indicates that health information accessibility and utilization of health information contributes to improved reproductive wellbeing of female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine to a very high extent.

2: What are the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information for information need satisfaction by female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine?

Table 2: Mean response on the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information for information need satisfaction by female

undergraduate students of colleges of medicine

S/	Item statement	SA	A	D	S	Mea	St.	Remark	Ran
N					D	n	D		k
1	Health information not packaged in an appealing/attractive format	34	11 9	3 6	32	3.46	0.86	Accepted	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Lack of health counsellors for students	34 8	99	5 2	32	3.44	0.90	Accepted	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Negative attitudes of library staff members are a major problem	30	18 0	1 9	32	3.41	0.82	Accepted	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Cultural or religious constraints	31 6	14 7	3 6	32	3.41	0.86	Accepted	3 <sup>rd</sup>
5	Physical accessibility to the library building is a concern	31	13 8	5	32	3.37	0.89	Accepted	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	Lack of organized seminars/workshop s on reproductive health	28 0	19 9	2 0	32	3.37	0.82	Accepted	5 <sup>th</sup>
7	Epileptic power supply to access electronic health information	27 7	20 4	1 8	32	3.37	0.81	Accepted	5 <sup>th</sup>
8	Lack of ICT facilities to access Health Information	31 1	13 1	5 7	32	3.36	0.90	Accepted	8 <sup>th</sup>
9	Lack of current and up-to-date health information in the	31 2	13 5	4	40	3.35	0.92	Accepted	9 <sup>th</sup>

10	library Relevant reproductive health information is	29 2	18 0	3	56	3.33	0.93	Accepted	10 <sup>th</sup>
11	usually lengthy Lack of awareness of trending RH issues through various media (posters, leaflets)	26 7	18 8	4 4	32	3.30	0.86	Accepted	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Non-availability of relevant RHI in the library	22 2	21 9	5 8	32	3.19	0.86	Accepted	12 <sup>th</sup>
13	Lack of adequate use of social media platforms to share informative and	21 5	22 4	6 0	32	3.17	0.85	Accepted	13 <sup>th</sup>
14	engaging content about RHI Lack of time to locate appropriate reproductive health	20 9	23 2	5 2	38	3.15	0.87	Accepted	14 <sup>th</sup>
15	information Lack of time to visit the College of Medicine Library	18 1	20 2	9	54	2.96	0.96	Accepted	15 <sup>th</sup>
	Grand Mean					3.31	0.87	Accepte d	

Data in Table 2 shows the response to the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information for information need satisfaction by female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine in North central, Nigeria. From the results; the major challenges are health information not packaged in an appealing/attractive format, with 3.46 mean score; lack of health counsellors for students, with 3.44 mean score; negative attitudes of library staff members are a major problem and cultural or religious constraints with 3.41 mean score; physical accessibility to the library building is a concern, lack of organize seminars/workshops on reproductive health, and epileptic power supply to access electronic health information with 3.37 mean score; lack of ICT facilities to access health information, with 3.36 mean score; lack of current and up-to-date

health information in the library, with 3.35 mean score; relevant reproductive health information are usually lengthy, with 3.33 mean score; while the least challenges is lack of time to visit the college of medicine library, with 2.96 mean score. The grand mean of 3.31 shows that the majority of female undergraduate students experienced all the challenges in accessing and utilizing health information.

**3:** What are the strategies for improving access and utilization of health information for information needs satisfaction among female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine?

Table 3: Mean response on the strategies for improving access and utilization of health information for information needs satisfaction among female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St.D	Remark	Rank
	To ensure improved access and utilization of health information:								
1	university authorities should ensure the library building is accessible to all students	377	154	0	0	3.71	0.45	Accepted	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	there should be regular workshops and seminars where students can learn about RHI from qualified healthcare professionals	349	182	0	0	3.66	0.48	Accepted	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	librarians should make use of social media platforms to share	383	118	30	0	3.66	0.58	Accepted	2 <sup>nd</sup>

	:C								
	informative and								
	engaging content								
4	about RHI	261	150	1.4				A 1	4 th
4	creation of	361	156	14	0			Accepted	4 <sup>th</sup>
	awareness of								
	trending RH					3.65	0.53		
	issues through								
	various media								
	(posters, leaflets)								.1
5	the use of the	333	195	3	0			Accepted	5 <sup>th</sup>
	College of								
	Medicine library					3.62	0.50		
	should be								
	mandatory								
6	a look for	329	202	0	0			Accepted	6 <sup>th</sup>
	alternative means								
	for funds by								
	management of								
	college of								
	medicine libraries					3.62	0.49		
	for packaging and								
	repackaging of								
	RHI in attracting								
	formats to the								
	students								
7	provision of stable	328	189	14	0			Accepted	7 <sup>th</sup>
	electricity power					3.59	0.54	-	
	supply								
8	Library staff	340	153	38	0			Accepted	8 <sup>th</sup>
	members should					3.57	0.62	•	
	be friendly								
9	relevant	316	181	34	0			Accepted	9 <sup>th</sup>
	reproductive							•	
	health information					3.53	0.61		
	should be short								
	and precise								
10	there should be	305	198	28	0			Accepted	10 <sup>th</sup>
1		1	i e	1		1	1	1 1	ı
	health counsellors					3.52	0.60		

11	wrong cultural or	284	217	30	0			Accepted	11 <sup>th</sup>
	religious belief should be					3.48	0.60		
	disannulled								
12	relevant RHI	269	248	14	0			Accepted	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	should be made	20)	210	1.				riccopica	11
	available in the					3.48	0.55		
	library								
13	there should be	293	201	37	0			Accepted	11 <sup>th</sup>
	adequate							_	
	provision of ICT								
	facilities through					3.48	0.62		
	which access to								
	RHI can be								
	achieved								
14	library staff	357	84	58	32			Accepted	14 <sup>th</sup>
	should assist								
	students in								
	locating					3.44	0.91		
	appropriate								
	reproductive								
	health information								tb
15	heads of libraries	270	237	24	0			Accepted	15 <sup>th</sup>
	should ensure the								
	availability of								
	current and up-to-					3.42	0.72		
	date health								
	information in the								
	college of								
	Medicine libraries Grand Mean					3.56	0.59	Aggented	
	Grand Mean					3.50	0.59	Accepted	

Data in Table 3 shows the response on the strategies for improving access and utilization of health information for information needs satisfaction among female undergraduate students in college of Medicine in North Central, Nigeria. From the results the major strategies are university authority should ensure the library building is accessible to all students, with 3.71 mean score; there should be regular workshops and seminars where students can learn about RHI from qualified healthcare professionals, and the librarians should make use of social

media platforms to share informative and engaging content about RHI with 3.66 mean score; creation of awareness of trending RH issues through various media (posters, leaflets), with 3.65 mean score; the use of college of medicine library should be mandatory, and a look for alternative means for funds by management of college of medicine libraries for packaging and repackaging of RHI in attracting formats to the students with 3.62 mean score; provision of stable electricity power supply, with 3.59 mean score; library staff members should be friendly, with 3.57 mean score; relevant reproductive health information should be short and precise, with 3.53 mean score; and there should be health counsellors for students, with 3.52 mean score; while the least strategy is heads of libraries should ensure the availability of current and up-to-date health information in the college of medicine libraries, with 3.42 mean score. The grand mean of 3.56 shows that the majority of the female undergraduate students accepted all the strategies.

**4:** There is no significant difference in the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information by female undergraduate students across the colleges of medicine.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on mean ratings on the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information by female undergraduate students

across the colleges of medicine

	Sum of	•	Mean			Decision
S/N	Squares	Df	Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	24.530	4	6.132	0.141	0.967	Not Significant
Within Groups	22956.423	526	43.643			
Total	22980.953	530				

P<0.05; D: Decision; S: Significant; NS: Not Significant

Table 4, reveals that the F value 0.141 is significant at 0.967. Since this significant level of 0.967 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance at which the null hypothesis was tested, the null hypothesis is therefore upheld. Hence, there was no significant difference in the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information by female undergraduate students across the colleges of medicine in North central, Nigeria.

# **Discussion of Findings**

# The extent to which health information accessibility and utilization improved the reproductive well-being of female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine

The study found that the health information accessibility and utilization of health information contribute to improved reproductive well-being of female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine to a very high extent. This is because the study found out that the health information accessibility and utilization of health information contribute to better understanding of sexual health, improved access to healthcare services, enhanced good fertility, improved menstrual health management, improved reproductive health practices, changed reproductive health behaviour, better management of reproductive health conditions (polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis), increased use of contraceptives, empowered to make informed decisions about reproductive life. and increased frequency of gynaecological check-ups. The findings of this study are by that of WHO (2017) who reported that access to information about maternal services should be available in the school through the College of Medicine libraries to help students make informed decisions. Information about safe sex and family planning services can help reduce unplanned pregnancies and their adverse consequences. Health issues affect many students" lives both socially and academically.

Similarly, the findings of the study correspond with the findings of Mbugua and Karonjo (2018) who found that accessing health information is crucial for undergraduate students to make informed decisions about their health. This information is not only important in their growth and development, it also influences their ability to achieve both educational and personal goals thus impacting their adulthood and ensuring they have healthy pregnancies and successful deliveries. Additionally, the findings of the study follow the findings of Cassidy et al. (2019) who reported that accessibility of reproductive health information is very crucial for these students to make correct decisions about their health, it helps the students avoid falling into sexual health problems that may affect their academic life. Also, the findings of Mbelle et al., (2018) reported that accessing reproductive health information helps students to avoid sexually infections unplanned pregnancies, transmitted (STI), and responsibilities which may adversely affect their education, career and their future progress; it also makes sure that they have healthy pregnancies and successful child deliveries.

Challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information for information needs satisfaction by female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine

The study found that, the major challenges are health information not packaged in an appealing/attractive format, lack of health counsellors for students, negative attitudes of library staff members are a major problem and cultural or religious constraints, physical accessibility to the library building is a concern, lack of organize seminars/workshops on reproductive health, and epileptic power supply to access electronic health information, lack of ICT facilities to access health information, lack of current and up-to-date health information in the library, and relevant reproductive health information are usually lengthy. There was no significant difference in the challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing health information by female undergraduate students across the college of medicine in North central, Nigeria. This implies that regardless of institution, majority of female undergraduate students experience similar challenges in accessing and utilizing health information for information needs satisfaction by female undergraduate students of college of medicine, in North central, Nigeria. The findings of the study is in accordance with the findings of Awoyemi, Obi and Owoeye (2021) who discovered that poor infrastructure, cultural and social norms, and limited access to technology were major barriers to students' access to and use of health information.

The findings of the study also correspond with the findings of Umera et al. (2021) who revealed that lack of access to information, cultural and social norms, and language barriers were some of the challenges female students face regarding health information. Similarly, with the findings of Okeke, Eze and Ani (2019), factors hindering resource and service utilization include the absence of usage guides, inadequate funding, and insufficient power supply for ICT facilities. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2015), female students have less access to sexual and health information and services. Many female students are unaware of their health information needs or where to access necessary information. Significant barriers to utilization include ignorance about and misperceptions about health treatments (Shiferaw et al., 2020). Some women may not have access to health care providers, and online resources may be limited, language may also be a barrier to accessing health information for those who are non-English speakers. Young women in low-income households may face financial barriers in accessing health services, including tests and treatment for STIs, pregnancy tests, and contraceptives. However, barriers, such as social and cultural stigmatization, lack of awareness, language barriers, and financial

constraints, prevent people from accessing this information (Shiferaw et al., 2020).

Strategies for improving access and utilization of health information for information needs satisfaction among female undergraduate students of colleges of medicine

The study found out that, the major strategies are university authority should ensure the library building is accessible to all students, there should be regular workshops and seminars where students can learn about reproductive health information (RHI) from qualified healthcare professionals. The librarians should make use of social media platforms to share informative and engaging content about RHI, creation of awareness of trending reproductive health (RH) issues through various media (posters, leaflets), the use of colleges of medicine library should be mandatory, and a look for alternative means of funds by management of colleges of medicine libraries for packaging and repackaging of RHI in attracting formats to the students, provision of stable electricity power supply. Library staff members should be friendly, relevant reproductive health information should be short and precise, and there should be health counsellors for students.

The findings of the study is in accordance with the findings of Ezema (2016) who suggested improved rural development strategies such as information distribution via mobile communications, the building of remote libraries and information centers with Internet hubs, and periodic long-lasting adult literacy campaigns centred on information about health. The findings of the study also correspond with the findings of Melaku (2014) who reported that, one of the methods that can be used to improve health challenges is through the provision of relevant and timely sexual and reproductive health information (SRHI) to the youths, which include those studying in universities. Similarly, the findings of the study is in agreement with the findings of Yari (2016) who suggested effective interventions that focus on a diverse approach from various stakeholders need to be in place to improve the health of female students.

#### Conclusions

The study investigated the challenges of accessing and utilizing health information for information needs satisfaction by female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine. The study concluded that, the female undergraduate students understand that accessing and utilizing health information needs for meeting their information needs has lots of benefits. However, challenges experienced in accessing and utilizing are health information not packaged in an appealing/attracting format, lack of health counsellors for students, negative

attitudes of library staff members are a major problem and cultural or religious constraints. Physical accessibility to the library building is a concern, lack of organize seminars/workshops on reproductive health, epileptic power supply to access electronic health information, lack of ICT facilities to access health information, and lack of current and up-to-date health information in the library. The study is a novel study on the challenges of accessing and utilizing health information for information needs satisfaction by female undergraduate students in colleges of medicine.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1. Librarians should make use of social media platforms to share informative and engaging content about reproductive health information
- 2. There should be regular workshops and seminars where students can learn about reproductive health information from qualified healthcare professionals
- 3. The medical libraries management should search for alternative means for funds by management of colleges of medicine libraries for packaging and repackaging of reproductive health information in attracting formats to the students.

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