

# Knowledge of Uterine Fibroid among Female Undergraduate Students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Leiomyomas, or uterine fibroids as they are commonly known, are mostly seen in women of reproductive age. However, they can go undetected in most women, and approximately 25% of women show clinical symptoms. Although fibroids are a global burden impacting 80% of premenopausal women, they are more prevalent among Black women than among women of other races. The design of this study was a survey design. The population of the study comprised of 293 400level female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The instrument is titled Knowledge of Uterine Fibroids among Female Undergraduate Student (KUFFUS). Results showed that Female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State are knowledgeable about uterine fibroid also, Female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe agreed on the signs of uterine fibroid. Conclusion and recommendations were made that there should be seminars to enlighten women on the scientific and medically approved best practices in fibroid management in order to correct the erroneous speculations and beliefs among religious women and the public at large.

**Keywords:** knowledge, uterine fibroid (leiomyomas), Students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to World Health Organization (WHO,1946) Health can be defined as a state of complete physical, mental, emotional and social well-being of an individual and not merely the absence of disease and infirmities. The meaning of health evolved over time in keeping with the biomedical perspective, early definition of health focused on the theme of the body's ability to function; health was seen as a state of normal function that could be disrupted from time to time by diseases. An example of such definition of health is: a state characterized by anatomic, physiologic and psychological integrity; ability to perform personally valued family, work, and community roles; ability to deal with physical, biological, psychological and social distress. There are so many diseases/infirmities that threaten the lives of individuals all over the world, thereby affecting their physical, mental, social, emotional and psychological well-being. Some of these diseases and infirmities include: Uterine fibroid (leiomyoma), Cancer, Coronary heart disease, High blood pressure, cerebrovascular disease, chronic obstructive lung disease (COLD), Pneumonia and Influenza e.t.c.

The main focus for this study will be centered on Uterine fibroid. Uterine Fibroids (also referred to as leiomyoma) are the most common benign neoplasm of the female reproductive tract, present in up to 77% of reproductive-age women (Okolo,2017). While Uterine fibroids may be clinically silent, many women with Uterine fibroids suffer with heavy

menstrual bleeding, chronic pelvic pain, dyspareunia, dysmenorrhea, bulk symptoms (e.g., urinary hesitancy, constipation), or pregnancy difficulties that negatively impact quality of life (Zimmermann, 2012; Zepiridis, 2016). Indeed, symptomatic uterine fibroids are responsible for over 350,000 hospitalizations and the leading indication for hysterectomy in the U.S. (Shahid 2021).

Despite the prevalence and burden of the disease, the origins and pathogenesis of uterine fibroids remain largely a mystery. Clues to possible driving factors for the development and propagation of uterine fibroid have come from their risk factors. Epidemiological studies have demonstrated that genetic factors such as positive family history and hypertension portend an increased risk of uterine fibroids, suggesting that these factors may influence vascular dysfunction and play a role in uterine fibroid pathogenesis (Stewart, 2017; Wise and Laughlin-Tommaso, 2016).

Uterine fibroid has been a challenge to many women all over the world and a threat to their lives. Uterine fibroids can cause pain and abnormal bleeding from the uterus, sometimes fibroids can make it difficult for a woman to get pregnant or maintain a pregnancy. Many women with this health issue are physically, emotionally and socially unhappy. It deprives them from living their lives to the fullest; having negative impact on them. UFs starts developing as small as a seed, if not early detected it grows into something very large and begins to affect the female uterus. Many women feel the sickness is spiritual, thereby they seek spiritual help, while many others leave the symptoms they feel unattended to out of fear of being operated on, while some others go about buying over the counter drugs (OCD) which most likely have diverse effects on them. In all these, the tumor keeps on growing until it becomes very disturbing and unbearable. Knowledge of uterine fibroids among females most especially undergraduates is an important public health issue, this is because knowledge is power and them knowing about the health issues that they may likely encounter in future will give them an edge over it; they know about it and know the necessary things to do and people to meet at that point in time.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to determine the knowledge of uterine fibroids among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State. Specifically the study sought to determine:

1. The knowledge of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University.
2. The knowledge of the signs of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University.
3. The knowledge of the symptoms of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. What knowledge do you have about uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University?
2. What are the signs of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University?
3. What are the symptoms of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

## **2. METHODS**

This study employs a survey research design. The study was carried out in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka among female students. The population of the study comprised of 293 400 level female undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University from the department of Human kinetics and health education (72) science education (154) and Library and information (67). This record was derived from the course reps of these departments. The entire population of 293 400 L female students in the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Library and information and science education were used for this study, since the size is considered manageable, therefore there is no sampling for the study. The instrument for data collection is a well-structured questionnaire prepared for the purpose of obtaining relevant data from the respondents. The instrument is titled Knowledge of Uterine Fibroid among Female Undergraduate Student (KUFFUS). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A contained information on personal data of the respondents while section B contained 20 items built into 3 clusters, B1 The knowledge of uterine fibroids, B2 The knowledge of the signs of uterine fibroids and B3 The knowledge of the symptoms of uterine fibroid. The response format for section two was based on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD), Disagreed (D) with values of

4,3,2,1 respectively. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used in data analysis. Arithmetic mean was used to analyze data related to the five research questions posed and standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents mean scores. The criterion mean of 2.50 served as the benchmark for making decision. Any mean scores below 2.50 criterions mean score was rated to disagree while any mean scores above 2.50 criterions mean score was rated agreed.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Research Question 1

What knowledge do you have about uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State?

**Table 1: Respondents Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Knowledge about Uterine Fibroid among Female Undergraduate Students**

S/N	Items on the knowledge about uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students	X	SD	Remarks
1	Uterine fibroid is a pelvic tumor disease	2.38	0.77	Agree
2	It prevents women from getting pregnant	2.70	0.59	Agree
3	Every woman has fibroid in them and are not aware	2.55	0.58	Agree
4	Every women is at risk of having uterine fibroid in their life time	2.47	0.82	Agree
5	Uterine fibroids can be permanently treated	3.11	0.52	Agree
6	People diagnosed with uterine fibroid can still live a normal life	2.69	0.69	Agree
7	Uterine fibroid can be hereditary	3.23	0.88	Agree
8	Uterine fibroid occurs as a result of our poor diet and poor life styles	3.39	0.49	Agree
9	Uterine fibroid worsens if not treated on time	2.52	0.44	Agree
10	Uterine fibroid destroys the womb of a woman	2.69	0.51	Agree
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.77</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 1 presented the item by item analysis of knowledge about uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State. The result revealed that all items (1-10) with their respective mean scores of 2.38, 2.70, 2.55, 2.47, 3.11, 2.69, 3.23, 3.39, 2.52 and 2.69 were rated agreed by the respondents. The cluster mean of 2.77 summarized that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State are knowledgeable about uterine fibroid. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.49 - 0.88 means that the respondents mean scores were closely related.

#### Research Question 2

What are the signs of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State?

**Table 2: Respondents Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Knowledge about Uterine Fibroid among Female Undergraduate Students**

S/N	Items on the signs of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate	X	SD	Remarks
11	A person with uterine fibroid feels pain during intercourse	3.42	0.71	Agree
12	There is a frequent urge to urinate	3.14	0.53	Agree
13	A person with uterine fibroid always feel sharp pain around the pelvic area	2.54	0.64	Agree
14	A person with uterine fibroid always want to stay isolated than to be with other people	2.45	0.63	Disagree
15	Many of them are easily intimidated because they feel they are sick	2.59	0.62	Agree
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.83</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 2 reveals the item by item analysis of the signs of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State. The result analysis revealed that item 14 with a mean score of 2.45 was rated disagreed by the respondents while items 11, 12, 13 and 15 with their respective mean scores of 3.42, 3.14, 2.54 and 2.59 were rated agreed by the respondents. The cluster mean of 2.83 summarized that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe agreed on the signs of uterine fibroid. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.53 - 0.71 means that the respondents mean scores were closely related.

### Research Question 3

What are the symptoms of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State?

**Table 3: Respondents Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on Knowledge about Uterine Fibroid among Female Undergraduate Students**

S/N	Items on symptoms of uterine among	X	SD	Remarks
16	There is a sudden enlargement of the abdomen	3.12	0.64	Agree
17	A person with uterine fibroid always look like she is pregnant even when she is wrong	3.29	0.62	Agree
18	People with uterine fibroids develop Tumor in their breast	2.66	0.63	Agree
19	They experience heavy bleeding during periods	2.61	0.68	Agree
20	Females with uterine fibroid tends to bleed through their nose	2.30	0.65	Disagree
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.79</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 3 revealed that item by item analysis of the symptoms of uterine fibroid among female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State. The result analysis revealed that item 20 with mean score 2.30 was rated disagreed while items 16, 17, 18 and 19 with respective mean scores of 3.12, 3.29, 2.66, and 2.61 were rated agreed. The cluster mean of 2.79 summarized that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe agreed on the symptoms of uterine fibroid. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.62 - 0.68 means that the respondents mean scores were closely related.

## 4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this research revealed that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State are knowledgeable about uterine fibroid. This means that female undergraduate students are knowledgeable that uterine fibroid is a pelvic tumor disease; people diagnosed with uterine fibroid can still live a normal life; uterine fibroid can be hereditary and that it can worsen if not treated on time. This findings also agreed with the finding of Adegbesan et al. (2018) that knowledge of fibroids was reported in 98.6% of the respondents and the information on uterine fibroids was obtained from radio, parents/relatives, health workers, and television. The findings also agreed with that of Akpenpuum et al, (2019) that more than 94.2% of women are aware of fibroid and whose major information were from friends, family and electronic media. The findings in research questions two and three respectively revealed that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe agreed on the signs and symptoms of uterine fibroid. This means that female undergraduate students are aware of the signs and symptoms of fibroids and they include; feeling sharp pain around the pelvic area, feeling pains during intercourse; frequent urge to urinate; sudden enlargement of the abdomen and development into tumor in their breast. This finding was in line with the finding of Akpenpuum et al. (2019) that identified symptoms are irregular menstruation, heavy bleeding, and lump in the stomach, constant miscarriage, and difficulty in conception, constant back pain and painful sexual intercourse. The findings also corroborates with that of Adegbesan-Omilabu et al (2018) that the identified signs of fibroids include; feeling sharp pains especially during sex and always wanting to urinate all the times.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State are knowledgeable about uterine fibroid. This means that female undergraduate students are knowledgeable about uterine fibroid. The study also concluded that female undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe are aware of the signs and symptoms of uterine fibroid.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be seminars to enlighten women on the scientific and medically approved best practices in fibroid management in order to correct the erroneous speculations and beliefs among religious women and the public at large. This seminar will also give room for more social interaction for women to freely discuss their fibroid condition.
2. The study also recommends that similar research be conducted among women in other parts of Nigeria in order to rekindle public consciousness on the menace of uterine fibroid, right from the undergraduate level thereby provoking academic discuss and policy framework.

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