

Patient-Centred Health Information Resources and Services in Hospital Libraries: A Survey of Current Practices and Challenges in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Today, it is pertinent for hospital libraries to provide health information resources and services that can empower patients who visit hospitals to make informed health decisions. However, the extent to which hospital libraries serve patients remains insufficiently investigated in Nigeria. The study surveyed the current state of health information resources and services provided to patients in Nigerian hospitals.

Methods: The study is a descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised twenty-seven (27) heads of hospital libraries who are members of the Medical Library Association of Nigeria (MLA-NG). Due to the manageable size of the population, a census sampling method was employed, and a web-based questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics.

Results: The most common health information resources available in hospital libraries for patients are textbooks. Others are general medical reference materials and databases with consumer health information. Available services are reference, book/media lending, and internet services. The majority of the libraries surveyed are situated within the hospital premises; however, opening hours are limited to weekdays. Pamphlets, flyers, and digital marketing are used to create awareness, while insufficient funds to acquire current physical and digital information are a major challenge.

Conclusion: There is a need for hospital libraries in Nigeria to improve access to information resources and services to patients by pursuing interlibrary collaborations and consortia as one of the ways of mitigating insufficient funds.

Keywords: Patient-Centred, Hospital libraries, hospital librarians, information resources, information services

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Introduction

Patient-centred information library services are a concept used to refer to the provision of health information resources, tools, and all other support activities of the library designed to meet the needs, preferences, and health literacy levels of patients and their families. Epstein (2023) defined patient-centred library services as specialized services targeted at providing patients with accessible, evidence-based health information to support informed decision-making, empowerment, and active participation in their care. Rooted in the principles of patient-centred hospital care, the concept places emphasis on patients, their families, and librarians or other information professionals as critical partners during a patient's treatment process (DeRosa et al., 2019).

Hospital libraries occupy strategic positions within healthcare institutions because they support clinical decision-making, evidence-based practice, patient education, and improved health information literacy (Ritchie et al., 2020; Rhue, 2022; Iftekhar & Gulati, 2025). More recently, hospital libraries have evolved from traditional repositories of medical literature to dynamic hubs that facilitate access to consumer health information. This evolution is rooted in the concept of health literacy and the global healthcare reforms that have prioritized patient empowerment, patient safety, and responsiveness to individual information needs.

As a result, hospital libraries are required more than ever before to actively identify, organize, and provide access to quality, understandable health information not only to clinicians, but also to patients. Hence, hospital libraries in most developed countries are hybrid information

environments that intentionally include health information resources and services for patients (Shipman et al., 2009; Meng et al., 2025). In addition, they provide curated patient information portals, multilingual pamphlets, digital literacy support, health literacy counselling, and mediated searches that help patients interpret complex medical evidence (Hawkins et al., 2019). Through the provision of diverse and reliable health information resources such as current textbooks, journals, electronic databases and point-of-care tools like UpToDate and DynaMed, there is improved patient satisfaction, and improved health outcomes.

Hospital libraries have long been committed to offering health information resources and services that support patient care (Rhue, 2022). In Nigeria, however, the transition toward patient-centred information services has been slow and uneven. Many medical libraries continue to face longstanding barriers, including inadequate funding, insufficient information resources, low institutional recognition for librarians, poor integration into clinical workflows, limited Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure, and the absence of formal policies supporting patient education roles (MacKenzie, 2021). As a result, hospital libraries largely remain oriented toward clinicians, with minimal structured services directed at patients. Although a few tertiary hospitals have made notable efforts to provide consumer health information and make efforts to play concerted roles in enhancing the overall quality of healthcare services (Popoola et al., 2020), such initiatives remain fragmented and under-documented.

In addition, the literature reveals a significant gap in empirical appraisals of patient-centred information resources and services available within hospital libraries in Nigeria. Existing studies focus mainly on information resources use, information needs, digital resource usage among clinicians, and infrastructural challenges in medical libraries (Okeke et al., 2017; Okafor et al., 2023), with little attention to how hospital libraries currently support, or could support—patients as active information seekers. This gap underscores the need

to examine current practices, challenges, and opportunities for strengthening patient-centred information services in Nigerian hospital libraries. This study, therefore, surveys the activities of Nigerian hospital libraries, with the aim of highlighting their current status and challenges.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions

1. What are the information resources available to patients in hospital libraries?
2. What are the information services available to patients in hospital libraries?
3. How do patients have access to hospital libraries?
4. Which strategies do librarians employ for creating awareness for library resources and services?
5. What are the challenges hindering the provision of information services to patients in hospitals?

Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on the Patient-Centred Care (PCC) Model. The PCC was originally depicted by Edith Balint in 1969 as “understanding the patient as a unique human being” and developed in the 1950s by Carl R. Roger, an American humanist psychologist who initially referred to the concept as client-centred therapy. Since then, there have been many other conceptualisations that have eventually led to the concept of PCC (Santana et al., 2017). The PCC is defined as being respectful and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values, and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions (Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Quality of Health Care in America, 2001).

Muganzi et al. (2024) stressed that the PCC model challenges the traditional biomedical approach by recognizing that optimal health outcomes do not only depend on clinical expertise but also emanate from meaningful partnerships between patients and healthcare providers. This is because PCC sees the patient as a whole person whose values, preferences, and lived experiences inform the planning, implementation, and evaluation of care.

For PCC to be effective, it must integrate interpersonal (relationships), clinical (provision of care) and structural (system features) dimensions (Greene et al., 2012). These core principles include effective communication between clinicians, patients and their families, shared clinical decision support, coordination and continuity of care, infrastructure that adequately accommodates patient, clinician and family needs, and appropriate access to care with minimum waiting time and improved patient satisfaction (Greene et al., 2012, Epstein et al., 2010).

Anchoring this study on the Patient-Centred Care (PCC) Model, the Patient-Centred Hospital Library Services Conceptual Framework is derived. This model provides a valuable theoretical lens for understanding the rationale behind patient-centred hospital library services. With the emphasis on better health outcomes for patients, the study on patient-centred health information resources and

services aligns with the PCC perspective by positing that hospital libraries are critical enablers of effective healthy information environments within hospitals. As traditional custodians of knowledge, the model calls on hospital libraries to adapt their core principles by recognising patients and their families as legitimate information users within hospital environments. By selecting and collecting patient-friendly health information resources, delivering patient-friendly information services, and ensuring that patients are aware of these services, hospital libraries will operationalise the PCC principle of supporting informed patient engagement. It is believed that such services will enable patients to better understand diagnoses, evaluate treatment options, and navigate the healthcare system, thereby contributing to shared decision-making and improved clinical encounters.

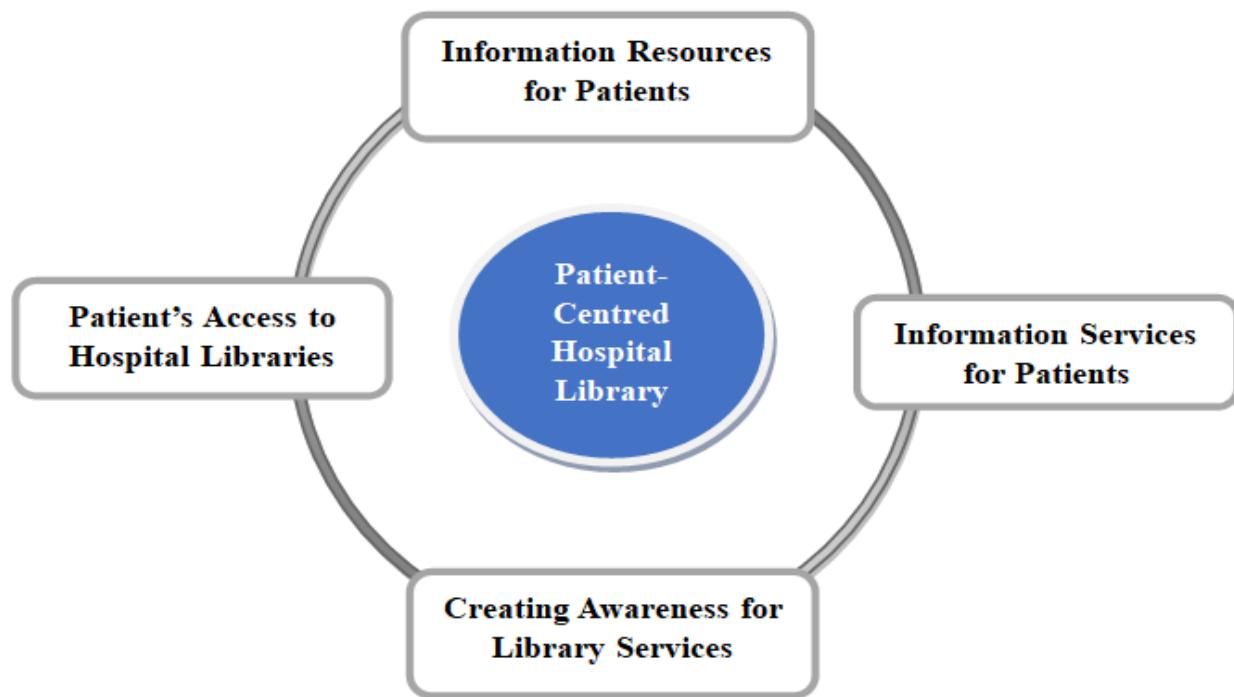


Figure 1: The Patient-Centred Hospital Library Services Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

Tertiary hospitals function as centres for specialized medical care, research, and are many times

involved in the training of new healthcare professionals. To be effective in achieving their goals, many of them have libraries that spearhead

the adoption of innovative healthcare approaches through the provision of information resources and services. Hospital libraries provide access to health information through their collections of books, journals, databases, and electronic resources, ensuring currency and relevance to healthcare needs (Semertzidou, 2019). Thus, hospital libraries are an integral part of hospitals as their parent organizations because of the many contributions they offer, such as learning, dissemination of knowledge and health information services. In addition, they provide information services to diverse categories of users (Okeke & Enem, 2023).

According to King (1987), hospital libraries represent, for the vast majority of health professionals, the most accessible source for library information and services. For many years, hospital libraries have been delivering information services that positively impact patient care quality and empower individuals and their families to make informed healthcare decisions (Gard-Marshall et al., 2014; Whitney et al., 2017).

Studies have demonstrated the critical role of hospital libraries in improving patient care and supporting patient-centred practices. Evidence from studies such as Marshall et al. (2013) and Siemensma et al. (2022) shows that access to high-quality, timely information in hospital libraries reduces adverse events, prevents misdiagnosis, and influences clinical decision-making. Large multisite studies reveal that up to 75–80% of clinicians change aspects of patient care—such as diagnosis, treatment, and medication choices—after using library resources. Hospital libraries also enhance patient trust and confidence, improve patient care and health outcomes by providing access and supporting staff with reliable health information (Gard-Marshall et al., 2014). Similarly, Roberts and Grabeel (2025) compared the library's health information service usage area and customer topics with the hospital's reasons for hospitalizations to examine commonalities and explore potential growth opportunities within the community. Their finding showed that the reasons people requested health information from the library aligned with their hospitalizations and that surveyed hospital libraries offered walk-in access or dedicated

enquiry desks, which allowed patients and their relatives to request information or guidance on health topics. They concluded that providing further outreach to the hospital's targeted zip codes will benefit both the hospital and the library by increasing usage of the health information service.

A number of institutions now allow clinicians to prescribe information developed by librarians, which is subsequently integrated into electronic health records (Carlyle et al., 2021). Additionally, clinical librarians support bedside information needs by delivering reliable, tailored, patient-specific content, sometimes through direct enquiry services or information prescriptions linked to electronic health records (Epstein, 2023). Marshall and Epstein (2019) further emphasized that hospital libraries offer access to evidence-based resources, interlibrary loan services, training, and supportive spaces, guided by the expert knowledge of hospital librarians who serve as information connectors within the healthcare system.

The study by Chua and Ng (2020) investigated health information and resource preferences of patients and their families to guide the planning of a Health Information Resource Centre (HIRC) in Singapore. The results revealed that among the 778 respondents, the overall top items chosen for facilities, resources, and equipment were a quiet and comfortable area for reading and reflection (77.2%), information about education and support services offered by the centre (71.6%), and computers with internet access (63.6%), respectively. The overall top three services needed in the resource centre were advice on useful resources (70.6%), announcements on newly received materials, programmes, and support services (64.8%), and resource personnel to assist with identifying materials/navigating through resources (53.2%). Written education pamphlets/brochures were rated as the most useful material (74.6%), followed by consumer health books (74.2%) and newsletters (59.6%).

Several studies on health information access and utilisation in Nigeria have highlighted factors such as inadequate infrastructure that hinder the delivery of library and information services in

healthcare settings in Nigeria. Early work by Oduwole (1999) underscored persistent challenges in users' access to reliable health information, noting gaps in resource availability, funding, and the uneven development of library services across institutions. Umenwa, (2016) asserted that lack of skills on the part of the staff, lack of access to electronic resources, lack of necessary technology for accessing online resources, and inadequacy of printers and photocopiers for users in the medical libraries are among pressing issues militating against the effective provision of medical library services. Similarly, Zare-Farashbandi et al. (2019), stated that although the involvement of clinical librarians on medical teams created advantages for patients, medical teams, clinical librarians as well as for education and research, however, this involvement suffers from barriers due to inadequate librarian's skills, insufficient human resources, lack of organizational support, the attitude of medical teams, lack of understanding from the healthcare sector and lack of proper infrastructure.

More recently, however, evidence shows some progress in the delivery of health information services. Popoola et al. (2020) reported that although healthcare professionals increasingly recognise the value of evidence-based information sources, inadequate ICT facilities, limited digital literacy, and inconsistent institutional support continue to hinder optimal use. Similarly, Okafor (2023) observed that the shift toward digital health resources has not been matched by adequate training or sustained investment in hospital libraries, resulting in underutilisation of online clinical databases and patient education tools. Complementing these findings, Musa and Omopupa (2024) demonstrated that while library users show strong willingness to use open access and library electronic health information systems, infrastructural deficits, particularly unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient access to up-to-date digital collections and short hours of service during the weekend, remain critical constraints hindering the use of hospital libraries. Evidence also shows that although some hospital libraries offer general health talks or outreach, health literacy awareness campaigns are not widespread or

systematically targeted at patients (Zaid, 2017; Ekoko, 2020; Onuoha & Chukwueke, 2021; Okafor, 2023). In addition, Afebende (2017) found that many hospital libraries are facing chronic underfunding from the government.

Few studies have demonstrated some level of hospital librarians' involvement in patient-centred information services activities in some states in Nigeria. Showing a shift in their traditional role, positioning them as active participants in patient recovery and mental health support. For instance, the implementation study by Dickerson et al. (2021) revealed that patient-directed cancer education materials were distributed to patients at Ahmadu Bello Teaching Hospital, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital and the University of Lagos Teaching Hospital. The outcome revealed that localized materials improved patients' understanding of their diagnoses and treatment plans. Patients responded positively to materials adapted to local languages and literacy levels, suggesting that well-designed informational resources can significantly enhance patient engagement and participation in their care. Similarly, the study by Agbetuyi et al. (2022), reported that medical librarians in teaching hospitals in the South-West part of Nigeria played a pivotal role in administering bibliotherapy through creative, self-help, and books-on-prescription methods. Also, respondents were able to access online books specifically addressing addiction and recovery. These interventions were tailored specifically to meet the individual needs of patients and were administered with the support of clinical staff.

The studies reviewed showed that most of the hospital libraries that deliver patient-centred services are in the US and other more developed countries, and none of these studies were hinged on the Patient-Centred Care (PCC) Model. In addition, the information services provided to patients, as seen in the reviewed literature, were few and from the south-western and northern Nigerian hospital libraries. Most hospital libraries in Nigeria primarily serve healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, and other staff) with resources for

clinical decision-making, research, and professional development.

Methods

This study is a descriptive survey because it aims to provide information about the current state of patient-centred services in hospital libraries. The study population is twenty-seven (27) tertiary hospital libraries across all states in Nigeria. This population consisted of hospital libraries whose library heads are registered members of the Medical Library Association of Nigeria (MLA-NG). The total enumeration sampling technique was adopted to cover all heads of hospital libraries. Using a structured questionnaire, quantitative data were collected from the heads of these libraries. The instrument titled "Patient-Centred Information Resources and Services in Hospitals Questionnaire" was developed with Google Forms (<https://forms.gle/bN7SkxbuSWWMt4CD9>). The questionnaire was divided into sections labelled A-E. Section A, collected biodata of the respondents, while Section B focused on collecting information about types of information resources and services available to patients in hospital libraries. Sections C to E, collected information about access, awareness and challenges hindering the provision of

information services to patients in hospitals. The questionnaire adapted the principles of the PCC model, which integrates different factors (provision of clinical care, effective communication between clinicians, patients and their families and adequate library services) to improve patient satisfaction. The introductory part of the instrument informed participants that their acceptance to participate in this study meant informed consent.

The responses to the items on the questionnaire were mostly based on 'agree' and 'disagree'. WhatsApp and emails were used as the digital channels to share the link to the questionnaire with the respondents. Calls were also made to remind and encourage respondents to fill out the instrument. A total of 19 responses were received from heads of the hospital libraries, giving a response rate of 70%, which was used for the study (a breakdown of the hospital libraries is presented below). The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages, and presented in tables and charts.

Results

This section presents results from the data collected.

Table 1: Response Rate

S/N	List of Participating Libraries	State
1.	Federal Medical Centre, Ebute-Metta, Lagos Library	Lagos
2.	Yobe State University Teaching Hospital, Library	Yobe
3.	National Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Library, Enugu	Enugu
4.	E. Latunde Odeku Medical Library, University of Ibadan	Oyo
5.	National Ear Care Centre, Library Kaduna	Kaduna
6.	National Eye Centre Library, Kaduna	Kaduna
7.	Delta State University Teaching Hospital Medical Library Oghara	Delta
8.	University of Benin Teaching Hospital Library	Edo
9.	Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, Yenagoa	Bayelsa
10.	Federal Neuropsychiatry Hospital, Yaba	Lagos
11.	Federal Medical Center Medical Library, Abeokuta	Ogun
12.	Medical Library, Federal Medical Center, Asaba	Delta

13.	Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital, Medical Library, Kaduna State University	Kaduna
14.	Federal Medical Centre Yenagoa	Bayelsa
15.	Usman Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital, Sokoto	Sokoto
16.	University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Port-Harcourt	Rivers
17.	National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos	Lagos
18.	Lagos State University Teaching Hospital Ikeja	Lagos
19.	University Of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu	Enugu

Table 2: Demographic Information: demographic data of respondents.

Gender Distribution of Librarians	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	7	37
Female	12	63
<i>Total</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>100</i>
Status/Position		
Deputy University Librarian	2	10.5
Head Of Medical Library	4	21
Deputy Chief Library Officer	5	26.5
Chief Librarian/Deputy Librarian.	4	21
Assistant Director/Head of Medical Library.	4	21
<i>Total</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>100</i>
Years of Working Experience		
Less than 10 Years	7	36
13 Years	3	15.7
15 Years	4	21
17 Years	2	10.5
22 Years	2	10.5
25 Years and Above	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2 presents data on the demographic characteristics of participating heads of hospital libraries, detailing their distribution by gender, status/position, and years of work experience. A significant majority of heads of hospital libraries are

females 12 (63%). Status/position-wise, respondents are majorly, in the rank of deputy chief library officer 5(26.5%), while the least category is deputy university librarians 2(10.5%). In terms of work experience, most respondents 7(36%) are in

the less than 10 years category, while only 1(5.3%) has been working for more than 25 years.

Research Question 1: What are the types of information resources available to patients in hospital libraries in Nigeria?

Table 3: Types of Health Information Resources for Patients

Information Resources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Physical Information Resources		
1. Textbooks	19	100
2. General medical reference materials	15	79
3. Newspapers/magazines	10	52.6
4. Recreational reading collections (fiction)	11	58
5. Magazines	9	47.3
6. Daily newspapers	11	58
7. Journals	9	47.3
8. Patient education materials (pamphlets)	7	36
9. Brochures on medical conditions and treatments	6	31.5
10. Audiobooks and digital media players with preloaded content	5	26.3
11. Large print books for patients with visual impairments	2	10.5
Digital Health Resources		
12. Health databases with consumer health information	8	42.1
13. E-journals	7	36
14. E-books on health topics for laypersons	4	21
15. Hospital website with health resources	4	21
16. Patient-oriented health websites	1	5.2

Table 3 shows that for physical health information resources, textbooks are the most commonly available health information resource; this is available in all 19 (100%) hospital libraries. General medical reference materials are available in 15 (79%) libraries, 58% of the libraries have recreational reading resources (fiction, magazines, newspapers). For digital health information resources, the most commonly available are databases with consumer health information (10,

Table 3 provides a breakdown of hospital libraries with different health information resources for patients.

52.6%). Less common digital resources available in hospital libraries are tablets/mobile devices with health apps and resources; only 1 (5.2%) indicated having them.

Research Question 2: What are the information services available to patients in hospital libraries?

Presented in Table 4 are the information services available to patients in hospital libraries.

Table 4: Types of Health Information Services for Patients

Hospital Library Services	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Reference services	10	52.6
2. Book/media lending services for inpatients	10	52.6
3. Outpatient borrowing privileges	7	36
4. Photocopying	8	42.1
5. Literature searching	7	36
6. Bibliotherapy	7	36
7. Selective disseminations of information	7	36

8.	Interlibrary loan services	2	10.5
9.	Relaxation rooms	5	26.3
10.	Newly arrived materials announcement	3	15.7
11.	Story time sessions for pediatric patients	1	5.2
12.	Mobile library carts that visit patient rooms	1	5.2
13.	Health information outreach	6	31.5
14.	Community health information literacy	4	21
15.	Internet access	10	52.6
16.	Access to computers	8	42.1
17.	E-books on health topics for laypersons	7	36
18.	Wi-fi access for personal devices	6	31.5

Table 4 shows that the most common services are reference, book/media lending for inpatients and internet services, which are found in 10 (52.6%) hospital libraries. Other services such as photocopying, outpatients borrowing, literature searching, bibliotherapy, SDI, and e-books services are available to some extent in 8(42.1%) and 7(36%) hospital libraries, respectively. Story time sessions for pediatric patients and mobile library carts that

visit patient rooms are less common, and only 1 (5.2%) hospital library offers them.

Research Question 3: How do patients have access to hospital libraries?

Presented in Table 5 are the aspects of how patients access hospital libraries.

Table 5: Patients Access to Hospital Libraries

S/N	Aspects of Access	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Library Closeness to Patients			
1.	Different building within the hospital premises	13	68.4
2.	Same building as the hospital	4	21
3.	Outside the hospital premises	2	10.5
Library Opening Hours			
4.	8am - 4pm weekdays only	9	47.3
5.	8am - 4pm including weekends	4	15.7
6.	Extended hours (beyond 7pm, including weekends)	5	26.3
7.	24-hour access (7days in a week)	1	5.2

Table 5 shows aspects of patients' access to hospital libraries in Nigeria with regard to library closeness and opening hours. On the library's closeness to the hospitals, the majority, 13 (68.4%), of the libraries indicated that they are in different buildings but within the hospital premises, while 4 (21%) of the hospital libraries indicated being in the same building as the hospital. For library opening hours, the majority, 9 (47.3%), are open on weekdays between the hours of 8am and 4pm. 5 (26.3%) are

open beyond 7pm, including weekends and 1 (5.2%) offers 24-hour library services every day.

Research Question 4: Which strategies do librarians employ for creating awareness for library resources and services?

Figure 2 presents the strategies employed by librarians to create awareness for library resources and services.

Figure 2 shows that the majority, 9 (47.3%) of respondents employ the use of pamphlets and flyers as a means of creating awareness for library resources and services; this is followed by the use of digital marketing strategies (6, 31.5%). Few libraries (2, 10.5%) do not carry out any awareness activities for their library resources and services.

Research Question 5: What are the challenges hindering the provision of information services to patients in hospitals?

Figure 3 shows the challenges hindering the provision of information services to patients in hospitals.

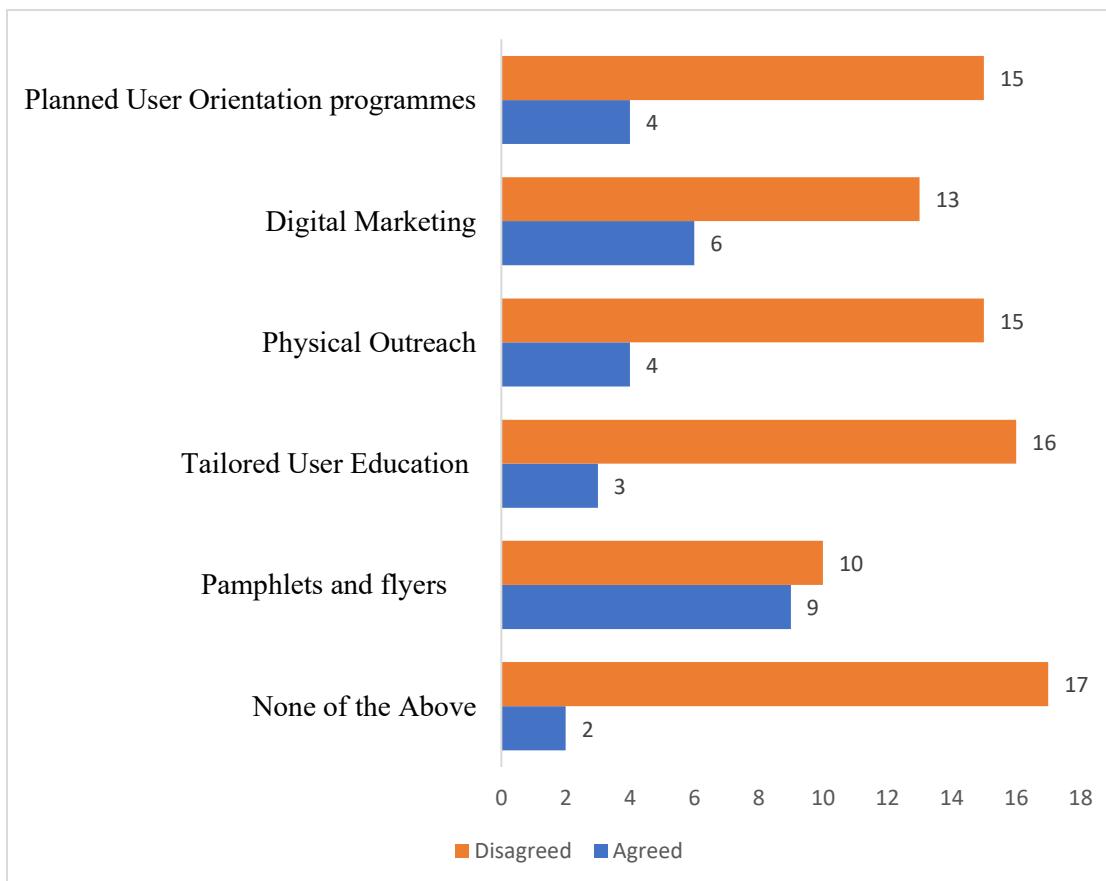


Figure 2: Strategies for Creating Awareness

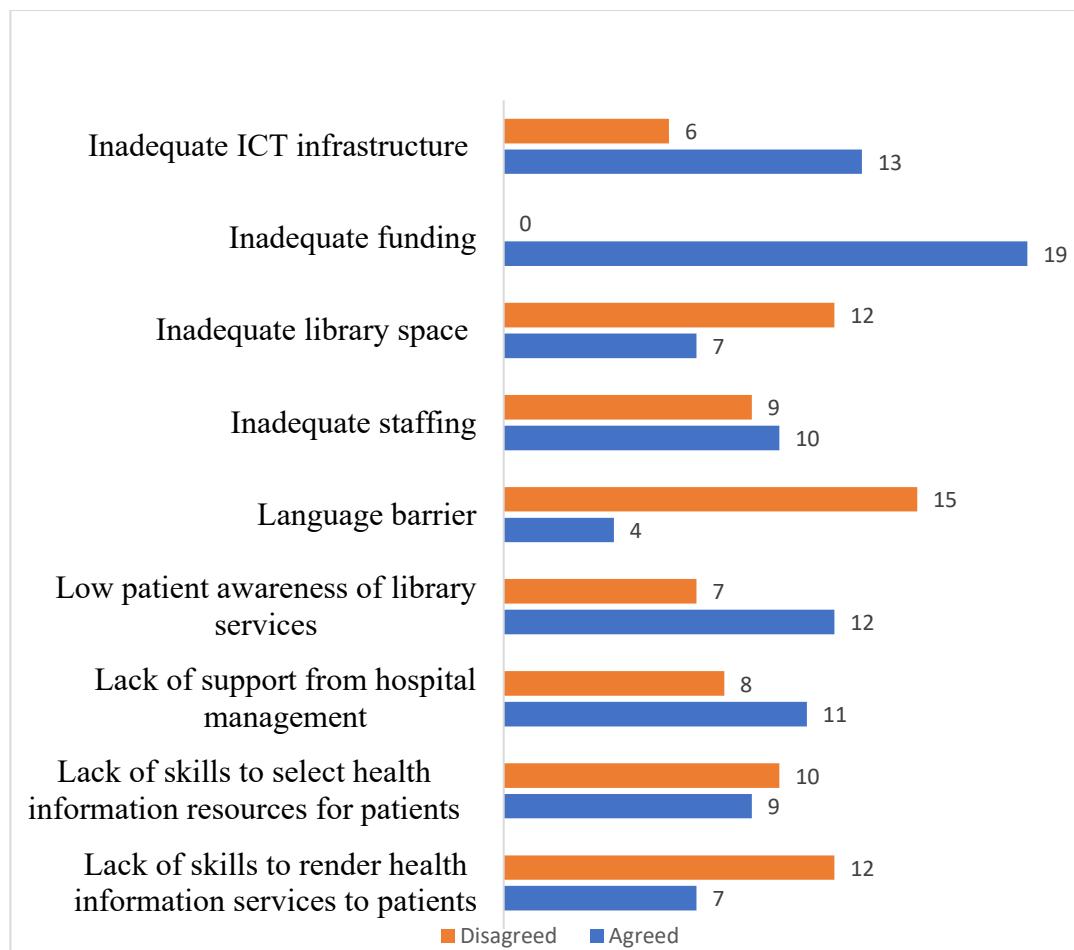


Figure 3: Challenges Hindering the Provision of Patient-Centred Library Services

The most common challenges faced by respondents in providing library services to patients are inadequate funding, as indicated by 19(100%) of the respondents. Inadequate ICT infrastructure is indicated by 13(68.4%), while 12(63%) indicated a lack of hospital management support as a challenge. On the other hand, 15 (79%) respondents disagreed that language was a challenge, and 12 (63%) disagreed that lack of space and skills to render information skills were challenges hindering the delivery of information services to patients.

Discussion of Findings

There are health information resources available for patients in the hospital libraries surveyed. While the most common are textbooks, others, such as general medical reference materials, daily newspapers/magazines and recreational reading collections (fiction, magazines, newspapers) are

available in the majority of the hospital libraries surveyed. In addition, digital resources like, databases with consumer health information, e-books and e-journals are also available in some hospital libraries for patients. This implies that although hospital libraries in Nigeria have some of the needed physical and digital information resources that could be used to serve patients' needs, other resources such as pamphlets/brochures, audiobooks and large print books for patients with visual impairments are also needed. This finding corroborates with an aspect of the result of a survey by Chua and Ng (2020) on the health information needs of patients, where they found that while consumer health books and newsletters were important to hospital patients, their most preferred information resource was written education pamphlets/brochures.

The most available information services for patients in hospital libraries are reference, book/media

lending and internet services. In addition, some libraries engaged in photocopying, outpatient borrowing, literature searching, bibliotherapy, SDI, and e-books services, while very few libraries engaged in community health information literacy, new arrival materials announcement, and inter library loan services. Story time sessions for pediatric patients and mobile library carts were almost non-existent services in hospital libraries. The implication of this finding is that most of the libraries are still very much entrenched in traditional library services, offering very limited digitally oriented services to patients. This finding corresponds with the report presented by Popoola et al. (2020), that most medical librarians in Nigeria do not provide specialized services, while monographs are the major information resources in their collections. Similarly, a study by Ikolo (2020) revealed that there is a perception of inadequacy of the information resources and services at the teaching hospital library in Delta State University.

On the other hand, the study finding disagrees with that of Marshall and Epstein (2019), who found that hospital libraries in Los Angeles offered access to evidence-based resources, interlibrary loan services, training, and supportive spaces, guided by the expert knowledge of hospital librarians who serve as information connectors within the healthcare system. It also does not agree with the results from a more recent study by Roberts and Grabeel (2025) that some hospital libraries offered walk-in access or dedicated enquiry desks, which allowed patients and their relatives to request information or guidance on health topics.

On access to hospital libraries, the study looked at two aspects. First, the study found that the majority of the libraries are located in separate buildings, but within the hospital premises, while a few are located in the same building as the hospital. On library opening hours, just one of the libraries surveyed rendered 24-hour library services. This is very commendable, as most of the other libraries are open from 8am – 4pm on weekdays only, while a few others open on weekends. This implies that most of the hospital libraries are close by and patients can access them. However, with opening hours mostly within official work hours, this might

not be favorable to in-patients. This is in agreement with the evidence from the study at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital highlighted by Musa and Omopupa (2024) that short hours of service during the weekend are a significant constraint for library users accessing information resources and services.

Some librarians employed the use of pamphlets, flyers and digital marketing as a means of creating awareness for library resources and services, while a few others are not involved in any awareness activities. Implying that patients may not be aware of the library resources and services available to them, which may, in turn, be reflected in low library usage. This result supports the assertion by Ekoko (2020), that health libraries must facilitate access to consumer health information through improved advocacy and active advocacy and promotion of the library resources and services. Similarly, it supports the opinion of Rhue (2022) and Shipman et al. (2009) that advocacy is vital for libraries to demonstrate their relevance, raise awareness among their target group and increase both the use of consumer health resources and referrals to librarians for health information literacy support.

On the challenges hindering the provision of information services to patients in hospital libraries, the results confirmed insufficient funds to acquire up-to-date physical and digital information resources among the libraries as earlier expressed by several scholars (Umenwa, 2016; Afebende, 2017; Zare-Farashbandi et al., 2019; Okafor, 2020). It also revealed some other hindrances such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, low patient awareness, lack of support from hospital management and lack of space. All of these challenges highlight key areas that are very significant to the delivery of efficient patient-centred services among hospital libraries.

Conclusion

Hospital libraries in Nigeria are involved in providing some basic information resources and services to patients. Most hospital libraries are close to where patients are; however, opening hours are only within official work hours. While the study identified gaps in information resources, services, access, awareness activities and

challenges of inadequate funding, limited ICT infrastructure, staffing, and lack of support from hospital management, it is hoped that hospital libraries in Nigeria will evolve to be able to meet patients information needs and encourage them to use hospital libraries, so that the crucial role of supporting patient care and improving health literacy in the healthcare system as recommended by the Patient-Centred Care (PCC) Model can be achieved.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Hospital librarians should plan regular awareness activities to showcase and market their resources and services to users of all categories.
2. Librarians should participate in trainings and workshops that are focused on modern and more relevant services that their special category of users need.
3. To remedy financial challenges, library managements should pursue interlibrary collaborations in the form of interlibrary loans and join consortia for subscriptions to electronic resources; this will help them to improve access to information resources at reduced costs.
4. Hospital libraries should consider extending their library opening hours to better serve users.
5. It is important for hospital management to integrate patient education and awareness activities of the library in hospital library policy.

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