## Promoting Healthy Lifestyles among Couples in Oyo State

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#### **Abstract**

The major purpose of this study was to evolve practices for promoting healthy lifestyle among couples in Oyo State. Two specific purposes on feeding and physical wellbeing practices, two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study employed a survey design. The population made up of spouses in Oyo State. A random sample of 840 respondents, (420 husbands and 420 wives) was drawn through multistage and random sampling techniques. Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide were used for data collection. Data were analysed using means and t- test at p< 0.05. Focus group discussion was summarized and organized. Major findings include among others, 27 feeding related, and physical fitness/wellbeing related practices for promoting healthy lifestyles among couples in Oyo State. Four recommendations were made based on the findings.

Keywords: Couple, Lifestyle, Healthy, Practices, Wellbeing, Feeding

#### Introduction

Lifestyles connote those behavior patterns, activities or ways of life that characterize individuals and families. These are specific ways people conduct their affairs. Lifestyles are manifested in the various decisions and actions relating to all aspects of family living including those dealing with roles and role combinations, consumer practices, occupations and employment (Anyakoha 2016). Lifestyle in the

opinion of Kembe (2005) is a way of living individuals, families of (household), and societies, which may manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social and economic environments on day to day basis. Therefore, lifestyle is the way a person or group of people feed, cloth, live, communicate, interact, the kind of job they do and activities they perform. According to Usoroh and Ekpu (2011) factors that constitute lifestyles include cultural family practices, environmental practices, styles living, values, beliefs, attitudes, and technology which may influence lifestyle choices and result in unhealthy or healthy lifestyle. Therefore, the major types of lifestyle include healthy and unhealthy lifestyles (Kembe, 2005).

Healthy lifestyle promotes healthy living, while unhealthy lifestyles provoke ill- health and diseases. Healthy lifestyle leads to fitness and wellness and reduces the risk of heart diseases and stroke (Lemchi & Osele, 2011). Healthy lifestyle is multidimensional pattern of self initiated actions and perceptions that serve to maintain or enhance the level of wellness, self actualization and fulfillment of the individual (Nestle, 2010). These include good nutrition, physical activity, stress management, interpersonal relationship, dress sense, and psychological wellness.

Unhealthy lifestyle, according to World Health Organization (WHO) (2009) is abnormal way of living which include smoking, drunkeness, alcohol use, sexual recklessness, unhealthy or poor diet and physical inactivity. These latter risk give rise to intermediate conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, abnormal lipid (cholesterol) and glucose metabolism. Ige, Owoaje and Adebiyi, (2013) noted that about 67% of Nigerians were reported for having at least one risk behaviour such as unhealthy diet, sedentary living, excessive alcohol use, physical inactivity and smoking which can result to lifestyle related diseases .In Oyo state, the report of the study carried out by Olaitan, Oyerinde, Dominic, Mohammed and Ajibua (2013) shows that 70% people suffer hypertension, 61.5% suffer overweight, 57% suffer obesity, 61% suffer diabetes, 45.1% suffer heart attack. It is therefore necessary that couples be helped to constitute healthy lifestyles and imbibe such.

Couples are two adults male and female that are legally married and maintains a socially approved sexual relationship (Ikudayo, 1999). Couples are husband and wife joined together religiously or by law and tradition which later resulted to a family (Kembe, 2005). Couples dwell in rural and urban areas and the environment a couple lives have significant influence

in their behaviours, values and lifestyles. Thus, couples who adopt healthy lifestyles can build and develop positive behaviours and good self concept. However, lifestyle relates to issues such as: feeding, clothing and physical wellbeing including exercises, rest-sleep practices for promoting healthy living.

Good feeding habits have an essential role in behaviour and human achievement at all stages. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle starts with good nutrition and feeding habit. This is achieved through a meticulous and systematic programme of adequate meal provision (Kembe & Ifejika, 2013). Good feeding or quality of food taken contributes to the state of health. (2015) pointed out that Olusanya having adequate diets the appropriate time such as breakfast, lunch, supper, reducing junk food, increase dietary fiber intake, reduction fat consumption, increase fruits and vegetables and increase intake proteinous foods promote good health. All these foods are essential in healthy diet which should be adopted. Hence, good feeding related practice promotes healthy lifestyle among couples and lead to healthy families and nation combined when with physical wellbeing.

Physical wellbeing involves physical activities, rest and sleep which promote healthy lifestyle among couples. Physical activity or exercise is any movement using muscles that helps, improves or maintains physical fitness. Jason (2008) described physical exercise as any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness. Frequent and regular exercise boosts immune system, improve mental health and prevent diseases such as heart attack, obesity. Sleep is a time when body and brain shut down for rest and relaxation while rest is a state or period of refreshing freedom from exertion. A lack of sleep also puts body under stress and may trigger the release of more adrenaline, cortisol, and other stress hormones during the (Youngstedt, 2005. Olaitan etal 2013 reported a study in Oyo state that 70% people suffer hypertension, 61.5% suffer overweight, 57% suffer obesity, 61% suffer diabetes, 45.1% suffer heart attack. It is therefore necessary that couples be helped to constitute healthy lifestyles and imbibe such.

## Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to evolve practices for promoting healthy lifestyles among couples in Oyo State. Specifically, the study determined:

- 1. feeding practices for promoting healthy lifestyle among couples.
- 2. physical wellbeing practices for promoting healthy lifestyle among couples.

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of rural and urban couples on the feeding practices for promoting healthy lifestyles among couples in Oyo State.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of husband and wife on the physical wellness practices for promoting healthy lifestyles among couples in Oyo State.

Methodology Design of the Study The design of the study was survey research design.

*Area of the Study* The area of study was Oyo State. Oyo State is divided into three senatorial districts namely Oyo South, Oyo North and Oyo Central with 33 Local Government Areas.

Population for the Study The population for this study was made up of the entire 1,086, 543 couples in Oyo State (National Population Commission,2006). This comprises of husband and wife who live together, either civil servants or self employed, business men or women in both urban and rural areas of Oyo state.

Sample and Sampling Technique The sample for the study was 840 respondents made up of 420 husbands

and 420 wives. Multistage sampling technique was used in obtaining a representative sample of the couples in the three senatorial zones in the state which include Oyo South, Oyo North and Oyo Central. Random sampling was used to select four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in each three zones making 12 LGAs for the study. Thirdly, from each of the selected 12 LGAs, purposive sampling was used to select two communities (one rural and one urban) making 24 communities for the study (12 rural and 12 urban communities). At the fourth stage, proportionate sampling was used to select 30 literate spouses from each of the 12 rural communities making a total of 360 respondents from rural communities (180 husbands and 180 wives). At the fifth stage, purposive sampling was also used to select 40 literate spouses from each of the 12 urban communities making a total of 480 respondents from urban communities (240 husbands and 240 wives). This made to total sample of the study to be 840 respondents of 420 spouses (420 husbands and 420 wives). Focus group discussion was also used in this study. 30 discussants were randomly selected among the samples from the three senatorial zones in the state with 10 discussants in each of Oyo South, Oyo North and Oyo Central zones. These discussants were ten couples {five husbands and five wives} in each of the zones.

Instrument for Data Collection Two sets of instruments were used for data collection for the study and were face validated by five experts. These include questionnaire structured titled: "Practices for Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Questionnaire (PPHLQ) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide. The instruments were developed from the reviewed of related literature based on the specific purposes of the study. Cronbach alpha reliability method was determine the used internal

consistency of the instruments and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.79.

Method of Data Analysis The data were analyzed using mean. Mean ratings from 2.50 and above were considered as important while mean rating of 2.49 and below were considered as non important. Data from Focus Group Discussion Guide were summarized and organized. T-test statistics was used for testing the null hypotheses at  $p \le 0.05$  level of significance and at 816 degree of freedom (df).

## Results

**Table 1:** Mean Ratings and t-test Analysis of the Responses of urban and rural couples on Feeding Related Practices for Promoting Healthy Lifestyle among Couples

						p-	Remarks	
SN	(a) Meal planning related practices	$\overline{X_1}$	$\overline{\mathbf{X}_{2}}$	$\overline{\mathbf{X}_{\mathbf{G}}}$	SD	values	RQ	H0
1	Plan balanced diet	3.73	3.74	3.74	0.62	0.11	I	NS
2	Plan for a variety of different foods.	3.59	3.62	3.61	0.54	0.33	I	NS
3	Plan meal ahead of time.	3.48	3.50	3.50	0.61	0.64	I	NS
4	Plan and buy fresh and quality food.	3.64	3.69	3.66	0.57	0.23	I	NS
5	Avoid dented canned foods.	3.28	3.31	3.30	0.85	0.58	I	NS
	(b) Meal preparation related practices							
6	Reduce the intake of sugar.	3.66	3.67	3.67	0.69	0.77	I	NS
7	Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.	3.73	3.74	3.73	0.67	0.91	I	NS
8	Eat plenty of cereals preferably	3.71	3.66	3.69	0.80	0.50	I	NS
	wholegrain, and legumes.							
9	Limit intake of saturated fat	3.57	3.59	3.58	0.86	0.72	I	NS
10	Eat junk and processed foods.	2.08	2.17	2.12	0.82	0.26	NI	NS
11	Encourage increase in dietary fibre	3.30	3.05	3.17	0.79	0.01	I	S*
	intake							
12	Prepare delicious and tasty foods.	3.56	3.59	3.57	0.69	0.20	I	NS

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	(c) Meal consumption related practices							
13	Consume lean meat, fish and poultry	3.63	3.57	3.60	0.72	0.96	I	NS
	instead of red meat.							
14	Eat at appropriate time for proper	3.47	3.61	3.54	0.69	0.01	I	NS
	digestion.							
15	Consume less cholesterol foods e.g.	3.76	3.73	3.75	0.77	0.54	I	NS
	butter, red meat, egg.							
16	Avoid eating heavy food all the time.	3.50	3.73	3.61	0.76	0.02	I	S*
17	Maintain good and healthy eating habits	3.53	3.55	3.54	0.74	0.37	I	NS
	at all times.							
18	Serve warm foods always and not cold.	3.56	3.51	3.54	0.84	0.10	I	NS
19	Serve small food at a time.	3.57	3.69	3.63	0.80	0.04	I	S*
20	Drink a lot of water every day to reduce	3.43	3.44	3.43	0.76	0.78	I	NS
	body dehydration.							
21	Consume only moderate amounts of	3.41	3.49	3.45	0.71	0.10	I	NS
	sugar and starch.							
22	Take diet three times daily.	3.33	3.46	3.40	0.80	0.09	I	NS
23	Eat moderately to maintain ideal body	3.54	3.73	3.63	0.68	0.04	I	S*
	weight.							

**Key:**  $X_1$  = Mean of Urban;  $X_2$  = Mean of Rural; Xg = Grand Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Number of the Respondents (818); I = Important; NI = Not Important;  $S^*$  = Significant; NS = Not Significant.

Table 1 shows that 22 out of 23 identified feeding related practices have grand mean values that ranged between 3.17 to 3.74 which are greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4point response options. This shows that the 22 identified items are important feeding related practices while item 10 was 2.1 and regarded by the respondents as not important. 19 out of the 23 identified items had their pvalues ranged from 0.09 to 0.86 which are all greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, H0<sub>1</sub> of no significant difference is accepted for the 19 items. However, the p-values of the remaining four which are less than 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) result reveals the following feeding related practices for promoting healthy lifestyle among couples in Oyo State:

- Enjoying variety of foods improves healthy lifestyles among families.
- Buying fresh and quality food helps improves healthy lifestyles among families.

- Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables is good for health.
- Limiting intake of saturated fat promotes good health.
- Eating at appropriate time for proper digestion is good a form of healt

**Table 2:** Mean Ratings and t-test Analysis of the Responses of Husbands and Wives on Physical Fitness/Wellbeing related practices for Promoting Healthy Lifestyle among Couples

SN		<b>X</b> <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	$\chi_{G}$	SD	P-	Remarks	
	(a) Physical wellbeing related practices					values	RQ	H0
1	Engage in exercises that suit the body.	3.64	3.65	3.64	0.78	0.83	I	NS
2	Do exercise everyday with your spouse.	3.68	3.60	3.64	0.85	0.16	I	NS
3	Engage in moderate exercise to avoid depression.	3.46	3.44	3.45	0.79	0.40	Ι	NS
4	Reduce too much exercise in order not to be harmful.	3.18	3.24	3.21	0.72	0.25	I	NS
5	Avoid sedentary life (prolonged sitting time).	3.19	3.49	3.34	0.74	0.03	I	S*
6	Visit gymnastics centre.	3.35	3.55	3.45	0.86	0.01	I	S*
7	Combine sitting job with standing one.  (b) Sleep and rest related practices	2.98	3.09	3.03	0.87	0.27	I	NS
8	Sleep to relax body muscles and reduce stress.	3.51	3.58	3.54	0.63	0.17	I	NS
9	Build in rest periods/siesta within daily activities	3.54	3.63	3.59	0.65	0.47	I	NS
10	Have a good sleeping environment	3.49	3.47	3.48	0.75	0.16	I	NS
11	Avoid inducing sleep with drugs or keeping awake for activities all through the night.	3.35	3.67	3.52	0.68	0.02	Ι	S*
12	Have a good exercising environment within the home.	3.40	3.52	3.46	0.59	0.20	Ι	NS
13	Have a comfortable mattress and pillow to promote good night sleep.	3.51	3.53	3.52	0.68	0.22	I	NS
14	Take enough rest before going to bed.	3.30	3.50	3.40	0.82	0.04	I	S*
15	Bath before going to the bed in order to sleep well.	3.40	3.48	3.44	0.80	0.20	I	NS
17	(c) Recreation and leisure practices	2.06	2.00	2.02	0.04	0.24	т	NIC
16	Play ludo/scrabble together with partner.	2.96	2.89	2.92	0.84	0.24	I	NS

17	Watch television and movies regularly to calm down the nerves.	3.33	3.25	3.29	0.94	0.52	I	NS
18	Play some musical instrument.	2.85	2.81	2.83	0.92	0.21	I	NS
19	Play and have fun regularly with each	3.63	3.56	3.60	0.92	0.12	I	NS
	other at all time.							
20	Keep a collection of favourable music in	2.82	2.72	2.77	0.89	0.12	I	NS
	the house.							
21	Avoid noisy music that has negative	3.26	3.49	3.38	0.79	0.01	I	S*
	influence.							
22	Make home garden in the home.	3.22	3.26	3.24	0.86	0.99	I	NS

**Key:**  $\overline{X_1}$  = Mean of Husbands;  $\overline{X_2}$  = Mean of Wives;  $\overline{X}g$  = Grand Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Number of the Respondents (818; I = Important; S\* = Significant; NS = Not Significant.

Table 2 reveals that all the 22 identified physical fitness related practices had mean values that ranged between 2.77 to 3.64 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This shows that the respondents that 22 agreed the the table identified items in are physical important fitness related practices promoting healthy lifestyle among couples. 17 out of the 22 identified physical fitness practices had their p-values ranged from 0.12 to 0.99 which are all greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, H<sub>02</sub> of no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of husband and wife is accepted on the 17 items in the table. On the other hand, the p-values of the remaining five physical fitness practices, specifically items 5, 6, 11, 14 and 21 were 0.03, 0.01, 0.02, 0.04 and 0.01 respectively which are all less than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there were significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of husbands and wives on the five physical fitness practices for promoting healthy lifestyle among couples in Oyo State. The  $H0_2$  is therefore rejected on the five items in Table 2.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) revealed that following physical fitness related practices for promoting healthy lifestyle among couples in Oyo State:

- i. Engaging in exercises that suit the body.
- ii. Doing exercise everyday with your spouse.
- iii. Sleeping to relax body muscles and reduce stress helps to improve health.
- iv. Avoiding inducing sleep with drugs or keeping awake for activities all through the night
- v. Having a comfortable mattress and pillow to promote good night sleep.

vi. Playing and having fun regularly with spouse help in healthy living.

## **Discussion of Findings**

Findings showed that the feeding related practices for promoting healthy lifestyles among couples include: planning adequate diet, planning meal ahead of time, reducing the intake of sugar, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, eating plenty of cereals preferably wholegrain, and legumes, limit intake saturated fat, consuming lean meat, fish and poultry instead of red meat, eating at appropriate time for proper digestion, consuming cholesterol foods e.g. butter, red meat, egg and avoiding eating heavy food all the time among others. This corroborates with the findings of Ibrahim (2014) and Kavitha, (2009) that found out a good proportion of students have good diet quality for healthy living. The authors reported that the need for Nutrition is to improve the nutritional knowledge of adolescent which is expedient and should be included in the school curriculum, so as to create awareness of nutritional needs and importance to the health of the students. The findings of this study also corroborated with the findings of Ihensekien, Obasigie & Egealue (2009) and Achor (2014) in a utilizing study on of nutrition education for sustainable household nutrition in Nigeria where it was found out that nutrition and healthy feeding education helps to spark off creative and innovative thinking, changes of behaviour, development of attitudes, skills and confidence people need to improve their feeding and nutrition practices for healthy living. However, Westenhoefer (2009) explained that effective feeding practices by families must be conveyed through a suitable approach that can easily be adopted by families for improved healthy living. The finding of this study supported that of Olusanya (2015) in a study on assessment of the food habits and school feeding programme of pupils in a rural community in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. The author found that healthy feeding habits for children include: feeding on different foods, planning meal ahead of time, reducing the intake of sugar, eating plenty of wholegrain, and legumes, limiting intake of saturated fat, and eating more vegetables among others.

The findings showed that the respondents agreed that physical fitness related practices for promoting healthy lifestyles among couples include: engaging in exercises that suit the body, doing exercise everyday with your spouse, engaging in moderate exercise to avoid depression, reducing too much exercise in order not to be harmful, sleeping to relax body muscles and reduce stress, building in rest

periods/siesta within daily activities, having a good sleeping environment, having a good exercising environment within the home, watching television and movies regularly to calm down the stress, taking enough rest before going to bed and making home garden in the home among others. The findings of this study on physical wellbeing related is in consonance with practices Youngstedt (2005), Clement (2005) and Jason (2008) found out that physical activities such as swimming, playing, catching, throwing and running, walking, biking, farming or gardening, chopping of wood, grinding using grinding stone and others are good exercises for healthy living. findings of the study also conformed with the result of Gleeson (2007) and Jackson(2008) in a study who reported that, fitness and exercise, nutrition, rest and relaxation, and high self-esteem are good physical activities for healthy living. The findings of this study also agreed with the findings of World Health Organisation (2009) and Nayak (2008) in a study who found out that taking good rest, avoiding posture, engaging strenuous exercises that suit the body, playing and having fun regularly with spouses and having walking exercises are good physical activities to manage stress for healthy living.

## Conclusion

Lifestyle constitutes what an individual eats, lives, wears, drinks, smokes, physical activity, sexual behaviours and drug habits. Healthy lifestyle is a challenge to many individuals, couples and families in Nigeria, Oyo State inclusive. Although, many individuals understand the importance of healthy feeding, clothing, physical activity and good mental health but unable to change their unhealthy behaviours due to environmental practices, kinds of job they do, economic status and family cultural practices. The addicted unhealthy lifestyle has resulted into worse health conditions and death in extreme cases. The study therefore concluded that, there is need for couples in Oyo State and in Nigeria to adopt these identified practices for promoting healthy lifestyle such as good feeding, clothing and physical activities.

## Recommendations

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

- 1. That all the identified practices should be packaged as a training programme for enlightening married couples in Nigeria and Oyo State for promoting healthy lifestyle.
- 2. There should be periodic awareness campaign about causes of unhealthy lifestyles and the advantages of

- healthy living to educate couples on the need for healthy living.
- 3. There should be plays and shows organized and sponsored by government and NGOs to enlighten spouses on the number of unhealthy lifestyles people are engaged in and the negative consequences of such unhealthy lifestyles such as disharmony, mild sicknesses, chronic diseases and death.
- 4. Couples should be encouraged to embark on routine physical activities such as jogging, running, press up to keep healthy.

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