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PERCEPTION AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THE USE OF APHRODISIAC FOODS AMONG MALE STUDENTS IN A HEALTH INSTITUTION IN EKITI, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Aphrodisiacs can be classified according to their effects when consumed or administered. They can have positive psychological effects, thereby increasing sexual desire and pleasure through hallucinogenic properties or other mood stimulating properties. Aphrodisiacs can also have physiologically effects, such as enhancing erections through hormonal changes, increased blood flow, and muscle relaxation. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the perception and factors influencing the usage of aphrodisiac foods among male students at Ekiti State College of Health Sciences and Technology Ijero. The study utilized a descriptive survey design, and a total of 206 male respondents from different academic levels (100 to 400 level) were randomly selected. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0, and the findings were presented using frequency, tables, and bar charts. The results indicated that a majority of male students at Ekiti State College of Health Sciences and Technology Ijero have previously used aphrodisiac foods, and their perception regarding the consumption of such foods is significantly high (75.8%). The study also identified several factors that influence the usage of aphrodisiac foods, including anxiety, fear of sex, penile disease, and impotence. The results demonstrated a positive perception (58.2%) towards aphrodisiacs and revealed multiple factors that impact their usage among male students in the study area. Furthermore, the study established a significant relationship between perception and the use of aphrodisiacs ($df = 3, p < 0.05$). In conclusion, the respondents displayed a positive perception regarding the use of aphrodisiacs and their associated effects, and various factors were identified as influencing the usage of aphrodisiacs among male students at Ekiti State College of Health Sciences and Technology Ijero, Ekiti State, Nigeria. It is recommended that nurses educate youths in the community about the health benefits of using aphrodisiac foods instead of chemical agents to achieve sexual satisfaction.

Keywords: Aphrodisiac; Sex Drive; Libido; Male; Perception.

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), aphrodisiac drugs can indeed enhance and prolong sexual performance by increasing blood flow to the genital organs. However, it is important to note that the chemical components of these aphrodisiac agents can have serious side effects, including kidney and liver damage (NAFDAC, 2017). Despite safety concerns and warnings issued by the Ministry of Health regarding the use of unlicensed sex-enhancing products with unknown sources, the demand for these drugs continues to rise. This poses significant public health risks, and it is crucial to implement necessary regulations and controls to mitigate these risks. Since ancient times, herbs have played an important role in the treatment of different diseases in many regions of world, largely for their expectorant, aphrodisiac, diuretic, diaphoretic, antispasmodic, stomachic, and sedative properties. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that 70%–80% of the global population relies on herbs for primary health care. In addition, because they are natural products, it is generally believed that herbs are essentially safe and free from side effects. Consequently, the consumption of non-prescription herbs has increased steadily over the past few decades (Dayyak, 2015).

Diseases are significant threats to both health and life, as they disrupt our ability to lead a happy and healthy existence. Daily stressors at work and home further contribute to an unfavorable environment for maintaining good health. In the case of men, this stress can also have a negative impact on their sexual health (Chaudhry, 2014). Sexual health plays a crucial

role in fostering responsible, safe, and satisfying sexual lives. During adolescence, the knowledge that individuals acquire about sexual health becomes a vital factor in the development of healthy sexuality. The attitudes, beliefs, and misconceptions surrounding sexuality held by adolescents can impede normal sexual activity and give rise to psychosexual health issues. Recent surveys conducted among men have indicated a high prevalence of psychosexual health concerns, including premature ejaculation, Dhat syndrome, impotence, dissatisfaction, erectile dysfunction, and nocturnal emissions. While certain foods, such as fish, vegetables, and spices, have traditionally been attributed with aphrodisiac powers, none of these foods have been identified to contain specific chemical agents that directly affect physiological reactions. As a result, it can be concluded that the reputation of various foods as erotic aphrodisiacs is based on folklore rather than scientific evidence.

Aphrodisiacs can be categorized based on their effects when consumed or administered. They can have positive psychological effects, leading to increased sexual desire and pleasure through properties such as hallucinogenic or mood-stimulating properties. Additionally, aphrodisiacs can also act physiologically by enhancing erection through hormonal changes, increased blood flow, and smooth muscle-relaxing properties. This focus on the performance of the penis as a crucial aspect of masculinity is reflected in sexual enhancer advertisements and popular culture. These enhancers are seen as a solution not only for repairing erectile functioning but also for enhancing masculinity. It is important to note that sexual encounters do not solely involve the individuals directly involved but occur within a broader social and cultural context, influencing prestige, status, and reputation. Consequently, aphrodisiacs have become a means of enhancing one's self-image (Sankar, 2011). The lack of research on the utilization of aphrodisiac foods among adolescents prompted the investigation of perception in this study.

Objectives

1. To determine the use of aphrodisiac among respondents
2. Evaluate the perceptions of respondents about the consumption of aphrodisiac foods in the study area.
3. Assess factors influencing the use of aphrodisiacs among the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive research design

Study setting: This study was conducted at Ekiti State College of Health Sciences and Technology, Ijero. The participants for the study were male students selected from various academic levels ranging from 100 level to 400 level. The College consists of six schools, namely: School of Therapeutic and Intervention Sciences (A), School of Basic Medical Sciences (B), School of Community Health and Public Health (C), School of Environmental Health Studies (D), School of Health Information Management, Computer Science and Biostatistics (E), and School of Medical Diagnostic Sciences (F).

Target population: Male students selected from various academic levels at Ekiti State College of Health Sciences and Technology, Ijero.

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria: This study included the male undergraduate students who had given their consent to this study while female undergraduate student was excluded for the study.

Sample size determination: The sample size was calculated using Yamane's formula and size determine was 206.

Sampling technique: The sampling technique adopted for this study is simple random sampling technique. It was used to select the 206 participants for the study.

Research Instrument: A self-administered questionnaire was utilized as the instrument for data collection in this study. The questionnaire underwent a validation process to ensure its

reliability and validity. Face validity was assessed based on its appearance and overall satisfactory nature. Content validity was also evaluated to ensure that the questionnaire accurately reflected the relevant contents of the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method, which yielded a coefficient ratio of 0.92, indicating a high level of reliability. This approach ensured internal consistency among the questionnaire items, enhancing the overall quality of the instrument.

Data collection: Data was collected through self-administration of questionnaires which were retrieved back. Some of the respondents were also interviewed.

Analysis: Data obtained was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS 23.0 and data was presented using the descriptive statistics: frequency, tables, bar charts.

RESULT

Table 1 presents the respondents' perception of aphrodisiacs. It reveals that 88% of the participants defined aphrodisiacs as any food

or drug that arouses sexual instinct, induces venereal desire, and increases pleasure and performance. Additionally, 77.7% believed that enhanced sexual behavior can lead to increased relationship satisfaction and self-esteem. A significant majority of 81.1% expressed the belief that both men and women continue to use aphrodisiacs regardless of the scientific basis for their effectiveness in improving sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, 87.9% of the respondents considered substances that increase sexual desire, libido, and intensify sensations during intercourse and orgasm as true aphrodisiacs. Moreover, 60.7% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that sexual enhancers thus become a pill not only to repair, but also to enhance or improve, both erectile functioning and masculinity, 73.3% believed that use of aphrodisiacs comes with significant side effects and it was indicated by 53.9% that the side effects include renal toxicity and gastrointestinal haemorrhages while 87.4% claimed that the use of aphrodisiacs can be addictive with many serious consequences. This study conclude that the level of perception is very high (75.8%).

Table 1 : Perception of aphrodisiac agent

Perception	SA	A	N	D	SD
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
An aphrodisiac is defined as any food or drug that arouses the sexual instinct, induces venereal desire and increases pleasure and performance	140(68.0)	41(20.0)	12(5.8)	4(1.9)	9(4.4)
Enhance sexual behaviour may provide increased relationship satisfaction and self-esteem in humans	120(58.3)	40(19.4)	34(16.5)	6(2.9)	5(2.4)
Men and women alike have continued to use aphrodisiacs whether or not these drugs have any scientific basis of truly improving sexual satisfaction.	99(48.1)	68(33.0)	27(13.1)	6(2.9)	6(2.9)
Male impotence or erectile dysfunction is a common medical condition that affects the sexual life of men	67(32.5)	44(21.4)	56(27.2)	18(8.7)	21(10.2)
From time, people have sought substances that could increase a person's sexual libido	122(59.2)	38(18.4)	30(14.6)	10(4.9)	5(2.4)
Substances that would increase sexual desire, libido and increase the intensity of the sensations felt during intercourse and orgasm are the true aphrodisiacs	145(70.4)	36(17.5)	12(5.8)	5(2.4)	8(3.9)
Sexual enhancers thus become a pill not only to repair, but also to enhance or improve, both erectile functioning and masculinity.	125(60.7)	35(17.0)	34(16.5)	6(2.9)	5(2.4)
Use of aphrodisiacs comes with significant side effects	100(48.5)	51(24.8)	30(14.6)	21(10.2)	4(1.9)
Side effects include renal toxicity and gastrointestinal haemorrhages	67(32.5)	44(21.4)	56(27.2)	18(8.7)	21(10.2)
Use of aphrodisiacs can be addictive with many serious consequences.	140(68.0)	40(19.4)	5(2.4)	10(4.9)	11(5.3)

The above findings demonstrate the factors influencing the use of aphrodisiacs among the respondents. It is observed that 70.4% strongly agreed, 21.8% agreed, 1.9% were neutral, 2.9% disagreed, and 2.9% strongly disagreed with sexual dysfunction. Similarly, for anxiety, 32.5% strongly agreed, 10.2% agreed, 27.2% were neutral, 8.7% disagreed, and 21.4% strongly disagreed. Regarding depression, 43.7% strongly agreed, 33.0% agreed, 17.5% were neutral, 2.9% disagreed, and 2.9% strongly disagreed. In terms of stress, 49.5% strongly agreed, 18.0% agreed, 20.0% were neutral, 8.3% disagreed, and 4.4% strongly disagreed. Fear of sex had 2.9% strongly agreed, 2.4% agreed, 16.5% were neutral, 58.3% disagreed, and 19.4% strongly disagreed. Penile disease elicited responses of 12.1% strongly agreed, 17.5% agreed, 19.4% were neutral, 33.5% disagreed, and 17.5% strongly agreed. A decrease in

hormone level with age was strongly agreed upon by 59.2%, agreed by 18.4%, considered neutral by 14.6%, disagreed by 4.9%, and strongly disagreed by 2.4%. Premature ejaculation received responses of 72.8% strongly agreed, 24.3% agreed, 1.9% were neutral, and 1.0% disagreed. Impotence had 2.9% strongly agreed, 2.4% agreed, 16.5% were neutral, 60.7% disagreed, and 17.0% strongly disagreed. Lastly, peer group influence was strongly agreed upon by 48.5%, agreed by 24.8%, considered neutral by 14.6%, disagreed by 10.2%, and strongly disagreed by 1.9%. This study conclude that Showing factors influencing the use of aphrodisiac are: Sexual dysfunction (92.2%), Depression (76.7%), Stress (67.5), Decrease in hormone level with age (77.6), premature ejaculation (97.1), Peer group influence (73.8)

Table 2 Showing factors influencing the use of aphrodisiac.

Factors	SA f (%)	A f (%)	N f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
Sexual dysfunction	145(70.4)	45(21.8)	4(1.9)	6(2.9)	6(2.9)
Anxiety*	67(32.5)	21(10.2)	56(27.2)	18(8.7)	44(21.4)
Depression	90(43.7)	68(33.0)	36(17.5)	6(2.9)	6(2.9)
Stress	102(49.5)	37(18.0)	41(20.0)	17(8.3)	9(4.4)
Fear of sex*	6(2.9)	5(2.4)	34(16.5)	120(58.3)	40(19.4)
Penile disease*	25(12.1)	36(17.5)	40(19.4)	69(33.5)	36(17.5)
Decrease in hormone level with age	122(59.2)	38(18.4)	30(14.6)	10(4.9)	5(2.4)
premature ejaculation	150(72.8)	50(24.3)	4(1.9)	2(1.0)	----
Impotence*	6(2.9)	5(2.4)	34(16.5)	125(60.7)	35(17.0)
Peer group influence	100(48.5)	51(24.8)	30(14.6)	21(10.2)	4(1.9)

Keys: SA= strongly agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree, SD= strongly disagree

H0: There is no significant relationship between the perception of respondents and the consumption of aphrodisiac agents.

Table 3 displays the results of the chi-square test of association examining the relationship between respondents' perception and use of aphrodisiacs. The findings indicate a significant relationship between perception and use

of aphrodisiacs, with a degree of freedom (df) of 3 and a p-value of less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3 Relationship Between perception and the consumption of aphrodisiac agents.

Variables	Use of aphrodisiac			χ^2	df	Sig.
	High n (%)	Low n (%)	Total			
Perception				23.34	3	0.04
Poor	92(44.7)	28(13.6)	120(58.3)			
Good	37(18.0)	49(23.8)	86(41.7)			
Total	129(62.6)	77(37.4)	206(100.0)			

DISCUSSION

This study examines the perception and factors influencing the use of aphrodisiac foods among male students at the College of Health Sciences and Technology in Ijero-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The majority of respondents fall within the adult age range of 21-25 years. The study reveals that a significant number of respondents have used aphrodisiacs. Algier (2014) suggests that aphrodisiacs can have positive psychological effects, increasing sexual desire and pleasure through hallucinogenic or mood-stimulating properties.

The findings indicate a high level of perception among the respondents, which is consistent with the study by Adadow, Ziblim, and Sumani (2019) who found a positive perception of aphrodisiacs among their respondents.

The factors influencing the use of aphrodisiacs among the respondents in this study are anxiety, fear of sex, penile disease, and impotence. This differs from the findings of Adadow, Ziblim, and Sumani (2019), who identified peer pressure and media as the influencing factors for aphrodisiac use. Similarly, the results contrast with the work of Akinloye and Yinusa (2015), who reported that conditions like premature ejaculation and sexual dysfunction were the main factors influencing the use of aphrodisiacs. Furthermore, the findings of this study differ from the research conducted by Monir, Taher,

Rahman, and Ahmed (2018), who identified premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, and short sexual duration as the major factors affecting the usage of aphrodisiacs. The chi-square test of association conducted between respondents' perception and use of aphrodisiacs reveals a significant relationship (df = 3, p<0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study reveals that the respondents at Ekiti State College of Health Sciences and Technology, Ijero have a positive perception of aphrodisiacs and their effects. Additionally, several factors influence the use of aphrodisiacs among male students in the college. It is recommended that nurses play a role in educating youths about the health benefits of using aphrodisiac foods instead of chemical agents for sexual satisfaction. Mass media platforms such as newspapers, radio, and television should also be utilized to promote the use of aphrodisiac foods over chemical substances. Furthermore, policies should be implemented to regulate the sale of chemical aphrodisiac agents in pharmacies and supermarkets.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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