EVERYBODY IN NIGERIA IS A DOCTOR...':
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER
PERSPECTIVES ON LAY-DIAGNOSIS OF
MALARIA AND PNEUMONIA IN SOUTHERN
NIGERIA

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Background: Nigeria bears the highest and second highest
burden of malaria and pneumonia respectively in the world.
Lay-diagnosis is commonly used by parents for the home-
management of common childhood illnesses in Nigeria and
other countries.

Objectives: To explore stakeholder perspectives of lay-diagnosis
of malaria and pneumonia and the acceptability and feasibility
of training parents in the World Health Organisation Integrated
Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) guidelines.

Design: A qualitative study using individual face-to-face
semi-structured interviews. Participants Mothers (n=13) with
children under the age of five years presenting to primary
healthcare centres (PHCs) for routine medical consultations or
immunisation activities and health professionals (HPs) (n=17)
involved with the management of primary healthcare system.
Setting Benin City, capital of Edo State in southern Nigeria.

Results: Parents reported lay-diagnosis was widely practised by
themselves and their communities but recognised its limitations.
Parents were more confident in managing malaria as compared
to pneumonia due to the perceived severity of the latter. They
expressed willingness to undertake IMCI training for better
diagnosis of common childhood illnesses in their children.
However, few parents were reluctant to apply the IMCI skills so
acquired to other people's children concerned that they could be
held responsible for an adverse outcome such as admission to
critical care or death. In addition, some HPs were concerned that
training parents in IMCI could exacerbate the extant problem of
misuse of medications.

Conclusions: Lay-diagnosis is a widely practised diagnostic
approach by parents. There was some evidence of the acceptability
of training parents in IMCI for early diagnosis of malaria and
pneumonia. This approach could partially address the dearth
of healthcare capacity in Nigeria, as well as other developing
countries. However, a rigorous evaluation would be required to
address feasibility.

Biography
Kelly Elimian is a PhD student in the Division of Epidemiology and Public
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