



SOCIO-CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

Nkechi G. Onah

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major health challenge facing the world today. Many countries are under lockdown as a way to control the spread of the virus. Nigeria in her own response to the pandemic has mapped out measures to control the pandemic, which also includes lockdown and closure of borders. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on different people across the globe. The impact of the pandemic on the socio-cultural and religious life of Nigerians has not been adequately explored. This is what this paper sets out to investigate. The article draws data from official documents, interviews, and other relevant materials. Using a descriptive narrative approach, the paper reveals that the family life of Nigerians is disrupted, poverty is exacerbated and gender-based violence is aggravated. The religious life of the people is also affected. The communal religious experience and participation which the people see as essential in their daily lives are also interrupted. The situation leaves the people in a state of despair. Recommendations were made on how to alleviate the suffering of people.

Introduction

COVID-19 is a major health challenge facing the world today. According to Wu, Chen, Chan (2020:217), "In late December 2019, a previous unidentified coronavirus, currently named as the 2019 novel coronavirus, emerged from Wuhan, China, and resulted in a formidable outbreak in many cities in China and expanded globally". The novel COVID-19 has spread to different parts of the world, infecting 5,813,239 people while 357,892 people have died after contracting the virus (Worldometer, as of May 28, 2020). The number of infections around the world keeps increasing by the day. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO 2020). The pandemic is affecting all segments of the population creating human, social and economic crises (United Nations 2020). However, older people are particularly susceptible to the risk of infection from COVID-19, especially those with chronic

health conditions such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes (United Nations 2020). Similarly, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), notes that older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

After exposure to COVID-19, one may start experiencing the symptoms of the virus from 2-14 days (CDC 2020). Symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild to severe illness. These symptoms, according to CDC (2020) include coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell. Others include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhoea. At the time of writing this paper, although a number of interventions had been in circulation for some time in some countries, there is no approved vaccine for the virus but scientists are working hard towards developing one. As a result of this novel Coronavirus, many countries are in complete lockdown while some are in partial lockdown.

In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in Lagos State, on the 27th of February 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control 2020). The first index case was from an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos on 25th February 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control 2020). In Ogun State, another patient was identified and was discovered to have been in contact with the Italian (PM News 2020). Since then, there have been many more cases and the virus has spread to different parts of Nigeria. By the time of writing this paper, Nigeria has recorded 8,733 cases and 254 deaths (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, as of May 28, 2020). The global spread of the virus has overwhelmed health systems and caused widespread social and economic disruption (World Health Organization 2020).

Initially, there were misconceptions surrounding the novel COVID-19 virus in Nigeria. A lot of rumours, misinformation, and misconceptions were spreading on social media. Some people believed that the virus was not real, some believed it was a disease for the rich and elite. Some said it was for foreigners and those who had travelled overseas. And for some others, it was just a different type of malaria. Many people also assumed that the virus could not survive under the sun so could not thrive in Nigeria. This assumption came from finding that the COVID-19, like many other viruses, is heat-labile, meaning it is deactivated or destroyed by higher temperatures. However, this does not necessarily translate to the

above assumption, as they will later discover. These false beliefs and lack-adaisical attitude of some people contributed to the spread of COVID-19 in the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) listed Nigeria among other 13 African countries identified as high-risk for the spread of the novel Coronavirus (Ezighbo & Ifijeh 2020).

Slowing viral transmission during pandemics requires significant shifts in behaviour (Bavel, Baicker & Willer 2020). To control the spread of the COVID-19, different measures have been put in place by the Nigerian government. These include travel restrictions, placing a ban on international and national flights, allowing only essential and emergency flights, interstate travel ban, border closure, internal lockdown, social distancing, closure of all schools, ban on all religious and social gatherings, compulsory wearing of face masks in public places, forced quarantine and curfew from 8pm to 6am in different states of the federation. People are also advised to stay at home, observe personal hygiene, wash hands regularly, and use sanitizers.

COVID-19 has an unprecedented impact on the social and religious life of different people across the globe but how it impacts the life of Nigerians has been understudied. The crux of this paper therefore is to investigate how COVID-19 has impacted the socio-cultural and religious life of Nigerians.

COVID-19: A Dilemma

COVID-19, the new global disease, is a threat to humanity and transmissible from person to person (World Health Organization 2020). The Coronavirus 2019 pandemic; (COVID-19), is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Sankar, Dhochak, Kabra & Lodha 2020:433). The disease is transmitted through direct inhalation of infected droplets (produced during coughing or sneezing by infected person) and direct contact with surfaces and fomites soiled by infected respiratory secretions (Sankar, Dhochak, Kabra & Lodha 2020:433). Transmission may occur through contact with contaminated surfaces followed by people touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth with contaminated hands (CDC 2020). Direct transmission from person to person can occur if the person is within six feet of someone who has the disease (CDC 2020). Therefore, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted by direct contact with infected persons and indirect contact with surfaces in the immediate

environment or with objects used on the infected person (e.g., stethoscope or thermometer) (WHO 2020). WHO (2020) also observed that infected persons may not exhibit signs or symptoms but can transmit the virus to others. The virus can lead to pneumonia, respiratory failure, septic shock, and death (WebMD 2020).

Impact on Socio-Cultural and Religious Life

As the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic, it has different implications for different countries of the world. The COVID-19 Pandemic does not only have health implications, it also has socio-cultural and religious implications. Since the emergence of the virus, lockdown, stay-at-home order and social/physical distancing have become imminent across the globe. In Nigeria, offices, businesses, Churches, Mosques, markets and event centers were closed except for those providing essential services such as hospitals, pharmacy shops, food distributors and food stores. Many Nigerians live in poverty despite being blessed with natural resources. Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil exporter and has the largest natural gas reserves on the continent (The World Bank 2019). But Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty (Adebayo 2018). The 86.9 million Nigerians living in extreme poverty represent nearly 50% of its estimated 180 million population (Kazeem 2018:n.p). With an abundance of natural resources, Nigeria ranks 158 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP 2019).

The COVID-19 disease has already exacerbated the poverty situation in Nigeria. Lockdown and social/physical distancing measures put in place to control the spread not only distressed the daily lives of Nigerians but placed a burden on the livelihood of Nigerian families. These measures have altered the rhythms of everyday life for the Nigerians. Many households are struggling with income especially those running small businesses. The small businesses are struggling to survive and there have been job losses too. Many farmers find it difficult selling their products and the scarcity of farm produce has made the price of the available products beyond the reach of the poor.

Panic-buying as a result of government measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to scarcity of both imported and locally manufactured products. For example, in Enugu, Ijeoma (interview, May

20, 2020) stated that imported rice (50 kg) that used to cost ₦22,000.00 now cost ₦27,000.00, Semovita (10kg) which was ₦2,800.00 is now, ₦3,500.00, adult diapers which was ₦18,000 is now ₦24,000.00 and prices of garri and yam have also gone up. Food scarcity and high-cost of available food products have led to the insecurity of lives and property as well as contributed to the spread of the virus. Some people defy the lockdown order in search of survival. As the Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations (2020) observed “if food supply chains become disrupted and livelihoods untenable, vulnerable populations may be more likely to leave behind their livelihoods and move in search of assistance ... with the unintended consequence of potentially further spreading the virus and possibly encountering heightened social tensions”. The case of looting and armed robbery has been reported in Lagos and Ogun states (Mbah, Aljazeera April 14, 2020). The Nigerian government has provided cash transfers and made food donations to the less privileged to cushion the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, regardless, poverty is rife in many families.

The family is the foremost institution in Nigerian society. Family is referred to “as the oldest social institution in human history” (Oloya 2013:181). The family plays important roles such as nurturing, socialization, economic support, and the protection of vulnerable members (Shaffer 2000). Families gather to celebrate occasions such as births, naming ceremonies, weddings, thanksgiving etc and also gather during burial and funeral ceremonies. Many events have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Communal-living is at the core of the social life of Nigerians. Nigeria, like many African countries, also values communalism. Communalism, according to Mbiti means “whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group” and vice versa (Mbiti 1969:109). Therefore, contemporary Nigerians have found themselves in Socio-cultural and religious disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges brought about by the virus cannot be ignored. The mandatory measures to contain the virus threaten communalism and disrupt cultural and religious activities. Social visits among friends are discouraged. The usual common handshake or hugs when family and friends meet are also discouraged to curb spread of the COVID-19 disease. As earlier mentioned, festivities that bring families and friends together are banned. Commenting on this Ifeoma (interviewed, May 13, 2020) stated thus: “My wedding scheduled for April was cancelled because of the ban on gatherings. I and

my husband have already paid for the hall where the entertainment would have taken place. But everything has been cancelled for now”.

A person suffering from COVID-19 disease cannot be visited by family members and friends. Many hospitals in Nigeria do not permit visitors for patients with COVID-19 disease to avoid transmission. Unfortunately, the person suffers alone in the isolation centre. The needed social support, love, and care from family members are not granted. As Bellou and Geroianni (2020:n.p) observes that the family provides effective psychological and emotional support to patients undergoing treatment in the hospital. The presence of family members reduces fear and instils hope which has been found to help in the recovery process. If a person dies, the family members and friends also gather to give respect to the dead. The burial is organized and the family members in most cases are allowed to view the dead. In some cultures, immediate family members are allowed, as a ritual, to throw sand in the grave before the final covering of the grave with sand. Then the funeral ceremony can commence immediately or on an appointed date. But in the case of death as a result of COVID-19 disease, the deceased family is not allowed to claim the body for burial because it is contagious. Only the Ministry of Health is allowed to handle the dead. When the burial is taking place the family members are not allowed near to avoid being infected. A lady (Blessing, interviewed, May 25, 2020) lamented that she lost her niece due to COVID-19 but her corpse is yet to be released for burial. According to her, “my niece died of COVID-19 but the government has refused to release her corpse for burial. It is so sad”. In Igbo land, for example, the corpse of every Igbo is expected to be buried in his/her country home and necessary rituals are performed to enable the person to join the league of ancestors. This is why Nwosu et.al. (2017:53) noted that “the Igbo believe that corpse of the deceased should be brought home for “correct” burial while the spirit of the deceased should be “brought” home through essential rituals to join his ancestors”. Ancestors are revered in Igbo land. They are dead but they continue living in the community. In the Igbo worldview, there is communion and communication between the ancestors and the living (Ogbukagu 1997:263). The ancestors are the guardians of family affairs, traditions and ethics (Mbiti 1970:83). Therefore, burying the dead in his/her home is very important to Igbo people. Even when someone dies of other causes in this period of COVID-19 pandemic the restrictions attached to it do not give room for elaborate ceremonies that come with burial in Igbo land. This

has led to dead family members being kept in the morgues awaiting when the ban on gathering is lifted before burial.

Since COVID-19 induced lockdown and restricted movement, some people have found it difficult to visit their aged parents in their hometowns. In Nigerian culture, it is the responsibility of the children to care for their aged parents. Respect and care for the elderly form part of the African value system. Taking care of the elders is an obligation in African societies and Nigeria in particular. Many of the elderly parents cannot perform their daily activities without assistance from other family members. According to Atchley (2000) cited in Okoye (2012:140), adult children generally are considered to be the first line of support when caregiving assistance is needed for their parents. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a vacuum in the care of aged parents. Giving aged parents financial assistance amidst economic meltdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is becoming more difficult. The economic loss has put a strain on the family and social fabric of the society.

Another impact of COVID-19 pandemic that is of serious concern is gender-based violence especially against women and girls especially in homes as a result of the lockdowns to curb the spread of the virus. In Nigeria, women and girls have been experiencing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with 30% of women and girls aged 15-49 having experienced sexual abuse but with lockdown, reported cases of gender-based violence have substantially risen (International Growth Centre 2020). Those experiencing domestic violence are confined in their homes with those abusing them because of the lockdown. A day hardly passes without reports of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in major towns and cities across the country (THISDAY 2020). The Women Aid Collective (WACOL) recorded more than 30 cases of violence against women and girls in the last week of March, 12 cases were also recorded within the first week of April (THISDAY 2020). The causes according to THISDAY (2020) include idle stay at home by estranged couples, the lockdown of businesses, depleting family finances and increased fear and anxiety over the future and life after the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Lagos state, Ogun state, and the Federal Capital Territory which were under full lockdown experienced an exponential rise in the number of cases of domestic violence. Reported cases rose from 60 in March to 238 in April, an increase of 297%. Places like Benue, Ebonyi, and Cross River states, which

were placed under less stringent lockdowns by their respective local governments, had lower rates of increase in reported cases. The increase in cases of domestic violence in these states were only 53% between March and April (International Growth Centre 2020). Similarly, United Nations Nigeria (2020:4), noted that there has been a sharp increase in reported cases of intimate partner violence and domestic violence in Nigeria. Data on reported incidents of Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases in Nigeria based on preliminary information from 24 states shows that in March, the total number of GBV incidents reported were 346, while in the first part of April, cases rose to 794, depicting a 56% increase in just two weeks of lockdown (United Nations Nigeria 2020). United Nations Nigeria (2020) further noted that some of these incidents of violence have tragically resulted in the death of victims.

COVID-19 pandemic has impacted religion in Nigeria. Places of worship are shut down while religious activities that will bring people together such as conventions and congregational meetings have been cancelled. Worship is done live on social media, radio and through online television channels but this does not give room for physical interaction with other members of the church. Religious activities bring people together in love and solidarity. It allows people to reach out to members especially the needy and vulnerable groups. This social support is very important in a poverty-ridden country like Nigeria. Studies have shown that communal religious experience is very important in human life (Weinstock 2019). Attending religious services brings about better physical and mental health (VanderWeele & Siniff 2016). According to VanderWeele & Siniff (2016), “Something about the communal religious experience and participation matters. Something powerful appears to take place there, and enhances health. It is something quite different from solitary spirituality”. In a study conducted by VanderWeele (2016) cited by Rowley (2017) it was revealed that “people who attend religious services at least once a week enjoy better blood pressure, healthier cardiovascular, immune and endocrine functions and less coronary artery disease than those who don’t attend at all”. Research also suggests that religious participation might increase longevity, that is, decrease the odds of death within a 5-year or 10-year follow-up (VanderWeele 2016). Nigerians are religious and religion permeates every aspect of their lives. The Nigerian people have a serious attachment to their faith. Some of them view the inability to attend and participate in religious activities as a disruption to their everyday lives. For

many, going to church brings them closer to God who is all-knowing and capable of healing any disease, including the COVID-19 disease.

Despite the hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are positive impacts that are worth mentioning. COVID-19 has led to improved hygiene. As part of the precautionary measures against the spread of COVID-19, individuals are advised to wash their hands with soap and clean water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This has led to keeping clean water and hand sanitizers in public places in Nigeria. This is essential in maintaining good hygiene. In order to support governments in the battle against the Coronavirus outbreak, many corporate organizations have switched from their core business activities to producing materials needed in the fight against Coronavirus such as ventilators, sanitizers, personal protective equipment, etc. (Gbenga 2020).

The lockdown has also helped in strengthening relationships in families. Many families with working parents find it difficult to spend quality time with their children. With lockdown, they get more united, enjoying each other's company and thus, improving their relationships.

Recommendations

Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Nigerian government to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still much to be done to control the spread of the virus in Nigeria. These include:

- 1) The Nigerian government could invest in healthcare. There should be an improvement in health facilities in Nigeria. Many hospitals and health centres in Nigeria are dilapidated. Many hospitals are ill-equipped and inefficient to handle COVID-19. Many hospitals do not have testing kits, drugs, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ventilators and other facilities needed for proper management of the disease. The Nigerian government needs to equip the hospitals to enable the citizens to get proper medical care when the need arises.
- 2) Although the Nigerian government has been sensitizing the citizens on the nature and mode of transmission of COVID-19 disease, more awareness is needed especially in the rural communities. The misinformation concerning the novel coronavirus should be dissuaded and active effort through the use of billboards, pamphlets, social media and the local news, should be made to disseminate the right information. It is important for the government to acknowledge the impact of

COVID-19 on the social and cultural life of the people and to reassure them that the measures put in place to control the spread of the virus are temporary and for the greater good and wellbeing of all individuals. These will go a long way to contain the spread of the disease.

- 3) The federal government could ensure that cash transfers and other palliatives being distributed to cushion the effect of the pandemic get to the households that are in dire need of it. This will go a long way to decrease frustration and improve the lives of different families going through difficult times.
- 4) The government at all levels in Nigeria could distribute alcohol-based hand sanitizers and masks to different communities to mitigate the spread of the disease.
- 5) The Ministry of Health could, through the local government chairmen and health officers, reach out to the community leaders. These leaders should be made to ensure that events that will draw crowds are avoided to limit the exposure and spread of Coronavirus in their communities.
- 6) In the fight against the novel coronavirus, individuals should comply with the safety measures such as regular hand-washing with soap under running water, use of at least 65% alcohol (ethanol) based hand sanitizer, avoid face touching, maintain social distance and report to the hospital when sick.

Conclusion

The novel COVID-19 pandemic is a health challenge affecting people of all ages across the globe leading to the death of many people especially older adults and people with co-morbidities. From all indications, the virus poses a real threat to humanity, leading to the global communities articulating ways to contain the spread of the virus. Nigeria tries to respond to the virus through enforcing lockdown and border closure. Social distancing and personal hygiene are encouraged. This article has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health challenge but a pervasive issue in Nigeria affecting the socio-cultural and religious lives of citizens. The number of COVID-19 cases in Nigeria has also continued to increase by the day. It is on this note that the article insists that stemming the tide of the pandemic should be everybody's concern but more importantly the governments. It becomes imperative to state that the government should intensify its effort in stemming the rise of COVID-19 cases by improving

the health facilities, sensitization of the masses, and ensuring that cash transfers and other palliatives being distributed get to the most affected members in the society. The citizens should abide by the measures mapped out by the government to control the spread of the virus. Family members should enjoy each other's company within this period of lockdown since many families with working parents find it difficult to spend quality time with their children before now.

References

- Adebayo, B. (2018), 'Nigeria overtakes India in extreme poverty ranking.' Available online: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/26/africa/nigeria-overtakes-india-extreme-poverty-intl/index.html> on (Accessed 20 May 2020).
- Bavel, J. J. V., K. Baicker & R. Willer (2020), 'Using social and behavioural science to support COVID-19 pandemic response,' *Nature Human Behaviour* 4:460–471.
- Bellou, P. & K. G. Gerogianni (2020), 'The contribution of family in the care of patient in the Hospital,' *Health Science Journal*. Available online: <https://www.hsj.gr/medicine/the-contribution-of-family-in-the-care-of-patient-in-the-hospital.php?aid=3681> (Accessed 23 May 2020).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), 'People who are at higher risk for severe illness.' Available online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html> (Accessed 14 May 2020).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), 'Symptoms of Coronavirus.' Available online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> (Accessed 14 May 2020).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), 'Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings.' Available online: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations>. (Accessed 15 May 2020).
- Ezigo, O. & M. Ifijeh (1 February 2020), 'Coronavirus Spread: WHO Lists Nigeria Among High Risk Countries,' *This Day Newspaper*. Available online: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/02/01/coronavirus-spread-who-lists-nigeria-among-high-risk-countries/> (Accessed 27 May 2020).

- Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations (2020), 'COVID-19: Our hungriest, most vulnerable communities face "a crisis within a crisis".' Available online: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1269721/icode/> (Accessed 26 May 2020).
- Gbenga, A. M. (2020), 'Here are four positive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.' Available online: <http://venturesafrica.com/covid-19-here-are-some-positive-lights-amid-the-devastating-pandemic/> (Accessed 10 August 2020).
- International Growth Centre (2020), 'The shadow pandemic: Gender-based violence and COVID-19.' Available online: <https://www.theigc.org/blog/the-shadow-pandemic-gender-based-violence-and-covid-19/> (Accessed 29 May 2020).
- Mbah, F. (14 April 2020), 'Nigeria: Lagos residents defend homes against curfew bandits.' Available online: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/nigeria-lagos-residents-defend-homes-curfew-bandits-200414165917113.html> (Accessed 24 May 2020).
- Mbiti, J. (1969), *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, England: Heinemann
- NCDC (28 May 2020), 'COVID-19 Nigeria.' Available online: <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/> (Accessed 28 May 2020).
- Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (2020), 'First case of Corona virus disease (COVID-19) confirmed in Nigeria.' Available online: <https://ncdc.gov.ng/news/227/first-case-of-corona-virus-disease-confirmed-in-nigeria> (Accessed 15 May 2020).
- Nwosu, I. A., V.C. Njemanze, V. Ekpechu & B. Popoola (2017), 'Socio-cultural context of death and mourning practices in rural Igbo communities of Nigeria,' IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) 22/8: 47-57.
- Ogbukagu I. N. (1997), *Traditional Igbo Beliefs and Practices*, Owerri: Novelty Industrial Enterprises Ltd.
- Okoye, U. O. (2012), 'Family care-giving for ageing parents in Nigeria: gender differences, cultural imperatives and the role of education,' *International Journal of Education and Ageing*, 2/2: 139–154.
- Oloya, B.O. (2013), 'A social change and the family institution in Africa,' in V.T. Jike (ed.), *Nigeria for tertiary institutions*, Agbor: Progress Printing Associates.
- PM News (2020), 'Nigeria records second case of Coronavirus.' Available online: <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2020/03/09/breaking-nigeria-records-second-case-of-coronavirus/> 9 March 2020 (Accessed 27 May 2020).
- Rowlay, L. (2017), 'Five surprising scientific reasons to attend church.' Available online: www.lightworkers.com/5-surprising-scientific-reasons-to-attend-church/ (Accessed 21 May 2020).

- Sankar, J., N. Dhochak, S.K. Kabra & R. Lodha (2020), 'COVID-19 in Children: Clinical approach and management,' *The Indian Journal of Pediatrics*, 87/6: 433–442.
- Shaffer, D.R. (2000), *Social and personality development*, 4th edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- The World Bank (2019), 'The World Bank in Nigeria.' Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview> (Accessed 24 May 2020).
- THISDAY (April 2020), 'The Gender Effects of COVID-19.' Available online: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/04/14/the-gender-effects-of-covid-19/> (Accessed 27 May 2020).
- UNDP (2019), 'Nigeria Human Development Report 2019 Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century' (Briefing note for countries on the 2019 Human Development Report Nigeria)
- United Nations (2020), 'Everyone Included: Social impact of COVID-19.' Available online: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included-covid-19.html> (Accessed 14 May 2020).
- United Nations Nigeria (2020), 'Gender-based violence in Nigeria during the COVID-19 crisis: The shadow pandemic.' Available online: <https://nigeria.un.org/en/45324-gender-based-violence-nigeria-during-covid-19-crisis-shadow-pandemic-brief-4-may-2020> (Accessed 29 May 2020).
- VanderWeele, T.J. (2016), 'Religion and health: a synthesis,' in J.R. Peteet and M.J. Balboni (eds.), *Spirituality and Religion within the Culture of Medicine: From Evidence to Practice*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- VanderWeele, T. G. & J. Siniff, (2016), 'Religion may be a miracle drug: Column.' Available online: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/10/28/religion-church-attendance-mortality-column/92676964/> (Accessed 21 May 2020).
- WebMD (2020), 'Coronavirus and COVID-19: What you should know.' Available online: <https://www.webmd.com/lung/coronavirus> (Accessed 15 May 2020).
- Weinstock, C. P. (2019), 'Healthy Living How church may boost mental health.' Available online: <https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2019/religion-and-mental-health.html> (Accessed 10 August 2020).
- World Health Organization (2020), 'WHO Timeline - COVID -19.' Available online: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/27-04-2020-who-timeline---covid-19> (Accessed 31 May 2020).
- World Health Organization (2020), WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020. Available online: <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020> on May 30, 2020.

- World Health Organization (2020), 'Modes of transmission of virus causing COVID-19: implications for IPC precaution recommendations.' Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations> on May 16, 2020.
- World Health Organization (2020), 'Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19) Situation Report 73.'
- Worldometer, (2020), 'COVID 19, Coronavirus pandemic.' Available at: https://www.worldometer.info/coronavirus/?utm_campaign=homeAdUOA?Sion May 28, 2020.
- Wu, Y., Chen, C. & Chan, Y. (2020), 'The outbreak of COVID-19: An overview, *J Chin Med Assoc.*, 83(3): 217–220.