

The Preference and Perception of Mobile Health Applications Educating African American Women on Sexual and Reproductive Health



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Introduction

African American women are disproportionately affected by sexually transmitted diseases, reproductive cancers, and unintended pregnancies more than any other American ethnicity group. African American women are frequently diagnosed in late phases of diseases and infections when compared to women of other ethnicities. These outcomes derive from the lack of knowledge and education that African Americans experience from the absence of health insurance, lack of education, and financial barriers.

The utilization of mobile health applications represents a unique opportunity to provide informative sexual and reproductive health information through women's applications such as period trackers, birth control reminders, etc.

The aim of this study is to analyze the perception and preference of African American women who are utilizing mobile health applications for education on sexual and reproductive health information.

Methodology

The Institutional Review Board approved an anonymous online survey using convenience sampling of African American women between the ages of 18-50. The data was collected utilizing a web-based survey tool (Google Forms). The survey link was sent via electronic mail and to random participants through social media posting. A total of 159 responses were received. The data was collected between November 12, 2020 – November 18, 2020.

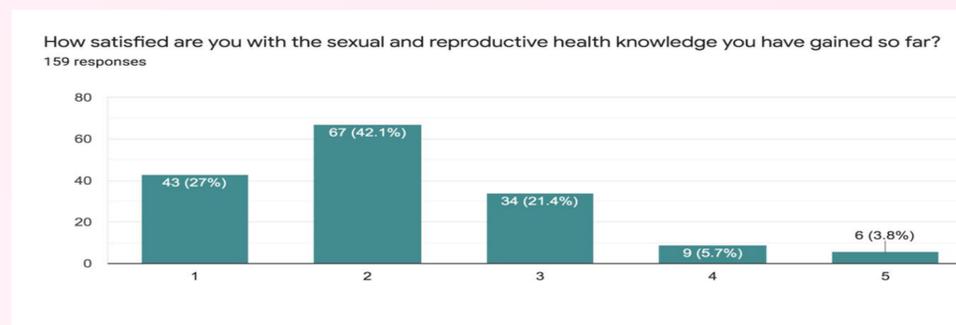
The survey consisted of 11 questions. Respondents answered questions regarding past sexual education course experience, use of women's health applications, interest in health messages, the importance of health information, personal knowledge satisfaction, and preference for receiving information.

Descriptive statistics were used to present the data collected. The demographic variables such as age range, ethnicity, and education level were analyzed by using pie charts with percentages. Participants responses regarding categorical responses through questions including Likert scales were presented as bar graphs. All charts and graphs were generated by Google Forms or Excel.

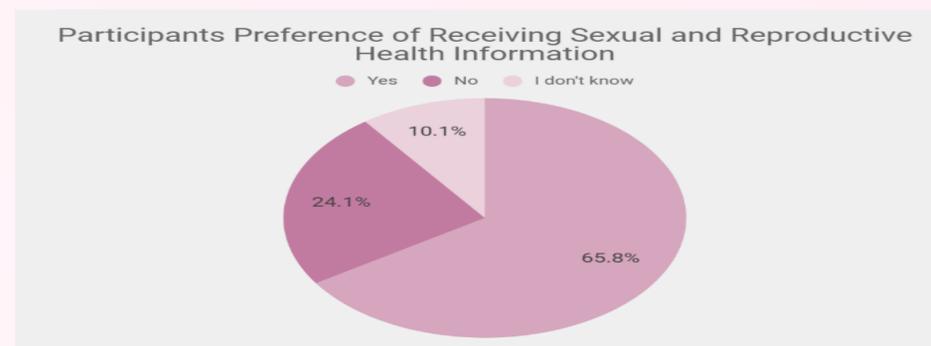
Results

- Only 26.6% of survey respondents identified within the 18-24 age group. Compared to 50.6% of survey respondents who identified as the 24-45 age group.
- 54.4% of the respondents earned a post graduate degree. Therefore, most of the survey respondents were highly educated women and should be expected to possess not only accurate sexual and reproductive knowledge, but overall general health knowledge.

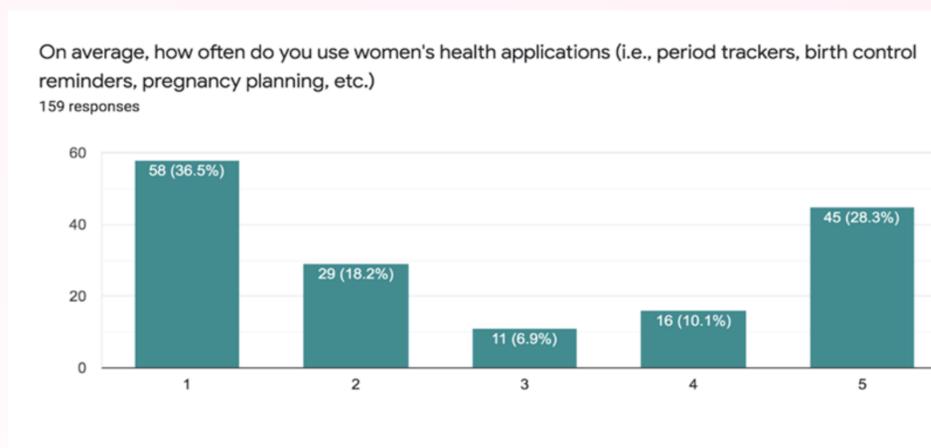
- Of the 159 participants, 27% are very satisfied and 42.1% are satisfied with their sexual and reproductive health knowledge.



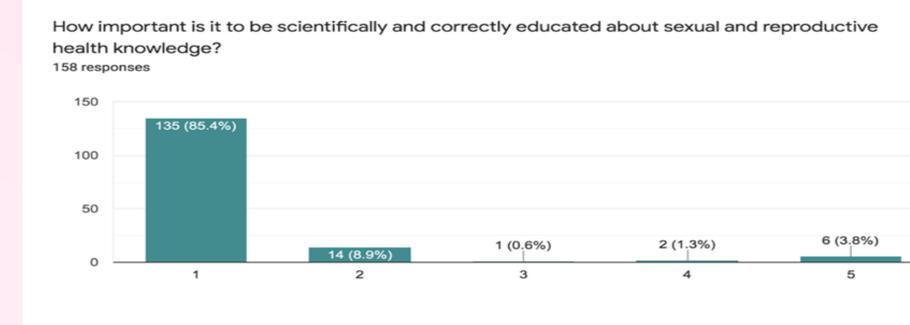
- Although, , most of the women are satisfied with their reproductive health, 65.8% expressed interest in receiving sexual and reproductive health information through mobile applications.



- Only 36.5% of the respondents indicated very frequently and 18.2% frequently that they utilize women's health applications.



- 85.4% believed that it is important to be scientifically and correctly educated on sexual and reproductive health.



- 37.7% of respondents preferred to receive education on sexual and reproductive life through trusted channels of information (evidence-based applications, books, websites, and educational sessions).

Conclusion

- Although, most respondents didn't identify as very interested in receiving information through mobile applications, respondents also weren't completely against the notion.
- This study expressed that women are interested in being educated beyond typical public health topics such as breast cancer, cervical cancer, HPV and STDs. Women are highly interested in receiving information regarding vaginal hygiene, endometriosis, PCOS, menstruation, etc.
- With preliminary evidence, this study shows African American women are open to learning and gaining knowledge on sexual and reproductive health through mobile applications.

Recommendations

- Further research should be conducted on barriers African Americans encounter with being educated on sexual and reproductive health.
- The effectiveness of educating low-income African American women through mobile health applications should be researched.
- More research should be conducted on the potential effect that women's health applications can have on the health on women users.
- Public Health agencies should collaborate with mobile health application developers to address how medically accurate health information can be provided to users.
- Focus groups should be conducted to gain knowledge on what information women are interested in learning about (i.e., vaginal hygiene, birth control, emergency contraception, etc.).