



Media Convergence and Awareness of Prostate Cancer Issues in Eket

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Abstract: This study examined the role of media convergence in creating and influencing awareness of prostate cancer among residents of Eket, Nigeria, with a focus on how converged media platforms enhance knowledge, attitudes, and preventive health practices. The objectives of the study were to: determine the level of awareness of prostate cancer among Eket residents; assess the extent to which media convergence creates awareness; investigate how converged media influence awareness; and evaluate the effectiveness of media convergence in promoting knowledge and preventive behaviour. The study adopted the Agenda Setting Theory and Health Belief Model as its theoretical framework. A survey research design was employed, and 380 respondents were selected using purposive and systematic random sampling techniques. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analysed using frequency tables and percentages. Findings revealed that while 65% of respondents were aware of prostate cancer, significant gaps remained among the uninformed population. Facebook, television, WhatsApp, and health websites were identified as the most influential channels, and exposure to multiple converged media significantly enhanced awareness and perceived effectiveness. The study concluded that media convergence is a potent tool for promoting prostate cancer awareness and recommended sustained, multi-platform campaigns tailored to high-risk populations.

Keywords: Media convergence, prostate cancer, health communication, awareness, Eket, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Prostate cancer has grown into one of the most disturbing health challenges facing men across the world, especially in countries with limited health awareness structures. The prostate, a small walnut sized gland located below the bladder and before the rectum, produces part of the seminal fluid and plays a vital role in male reproductive functioning. Cancer develops when abnormal cells within this gland multiply without control. Reports show that about one in nine men will receive a prostate cancer diagnosis in their lifetime, a figure that highlights the seriousness of the disease. Global records from the World Health Organisation in 2018 classified prostate cancer as one of the most common cancers, with 1.28 million cases worldwide and a particularly troubling incidence rate of 26.6 percent in Africa (Ezegwu, Obichili, Nwokeocha and Esther, 2022). Nigeria mirrors this global concern, as studies indicate that more than one hundred thousand Nigerians are diagnosed with various forms of cancer every year, while men face a particularly severe burden of prostate cancer (Faridah, 2019 cited in Ezegwu et al., 2022). Western Africa ranks among the regions with the highest prostate cancer mortality, and Nigeria, which has the largest population in the sub region, records both high incidence and high mortality.

Nigerian men experience an estimated 32.8 cases and 16.3 deaths per one hundred thousand men, which is more than double the mortality rate recorded in North America, and many Nigerians are reported to be

incurable at the point of diagnosis. Previous scholars such as Delongchamps, Sigh and Haas (2007) cited in Ezegwu et al., (2022) note that prostate cancer has now become the leading cancer among men, particularly among those of black African ancestry. Symptoms often manifest in the form of frequent urination, especially at night, weak urine flow and difficulty starting urination. Despite these symptoms, many Nigerian men have minimal knowledge of the disease and rarely undergo screening (Owoseye, 2019 cited in Ezegwu et al., 2022). Ogundele and Ikuero (2015) equally found that knowledge about the disease is generally low, while other reports indicate that one in four Nigerian men may face the risk of developing prostate cancer. These troubling figures point to a silent crisis that continues to affect men within the country.

Mass media hold an important responsibility in shaping how the public thinks about critical issues, especially those relating to health. Their power lies in their ability to set agenda on matters that demand attention, while also helping people to interpret issues that affect their wellbeing. How people make sense of prostate cancer depends, to a great extent, on how health matters are reported across various media channels. O'Brien (2020) as cited in Olu Egbor (2022) stresses that the mass media play a central role in guiding how societies respond to issues and how institutions develop strategies for tackling them. A well-informed public is more likely to take preventive measures, seek early screening and respond promptly to health messages. Media convergence has expanded the possibilities for

public health communication, as it allows broadcast, print and online platforms to work together to reach audiences with greater speed and wider coverage. Convergence, sometimes described as medimorphosis, reflects the increasing reliance of media organisations on digital platforms that allow the combination of text, images, sound and video on a single interactive channel, as noted by Shade (2003) in Ufot (2016). This integration binds both media professionals and their audiences to digital technologies that encourage frequent access to information. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have become powerful spaces for the circulation of health messages, and they offer opportunities for engaging large populations in meaningful ways (Ufot, 2016).

Nwafor, Onyali, Nkwuda, Ikpeze, Njoku and Orji (2022) explain that media convergence has improved the distribution of health content through the prompt sharing of visuals and audio materials. Despite these strengths, the role of media convergence in promoting awareness of prostate cancer remains insufficiently studied, especially in communities where health communication is still developing. Many existing studies have focused on illnesses such as diabetes, as seen in the work of Neiger et al., (2022), who examined social media use in diabetes self-care among Nigerians. While their study showed that participants gained better self-care habits through a Facebook group, little is known about how similar media efforts influence awareness of prostate cancer. Research conducted in Kenya by Mbugua (2021) shows that awareness levels remain low, yet mass media provide the primary source of information. Studies in Nigeria by Ogundele and Ikurowo (2015) and by Emeka Ebere, Orogbu, Omeye and Chinweobo Onuoha (2022) reveal that many people still possess limited knowledge of the disease and do not pay sufficient attention to prostate cancer messages. This reality suggests that media channels may not be fully maximised in driving awareness about the disease.

A clear gap exists regarding the level of awareness of prostate cancer among men in Nigeria and the specific media channels that effectively reach the age groups most vulnerable to the disease. This gap limits the ability of health educators, policymakers and advocacy groups to develop well targeted programmes. Communities such as Eket, which continue to grow and interact with different media platforms, need strong and deliberate communication strategies that encourage men to seek reliable information about prostate cancer. Awareness is a crucial step in preventing late diagnosis, fear, misinformation and reluctance to engage in screening. The growing presence of media convergence in Nigeria offers an opportunity to re-evaluate how information about prostate cancer is produced, shared and interpreted across multiple platforms. Social media, radio, television and newspapers each have the capacity to bring vital health messages closer to the people, but their combined impact remains unclear for this subject

matter. Research that focuses on how these platforms collectively influence awareness within a specific geographical area is necessary. This study therefore seeks to examine media convergence and awareness of prostate cancer issues among residents of Eket. The study aims to provide clarity on the extent to which men in Eket are exposed to information about prostate cancer, the media channels that serve as their most trusted sources and the effectiveness of converged media in promoting awareness. The investigation is expected to offer evidence that can guide future health communication efforts, strengthen awareness campaigns and support the design of strategies that reduce mortality linked to late detection.

Statement of the Problem

Prostate cancer remains one of the leading causes of illness and death among men, yet many Nigerian men still possess little knowledge about the disease, its symptoms and the need for early screening. The expectation is that the media, through their agenda setting role, should serve as a crucial source of dependable health information that guides the public towards preventive actions. Media convergence, which brings together print, broadcast and digital platforms, ought to provide a stronger channel for spreading prostate cancer messages in a manner that reaches men across age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. The situation observed in many communities, including Eket, suggests that this has not been fully achieved. Reports show that most men do not engage in screening and often encounter the disease at late stages when treatment options are limited. Several studies conducted within Nigeria reveal that awareness of prostate cancer remains low, even though the disease continues to claim many lives. The dilemma lies in the fact that mass media occupy a central place in public enlightenment, yet the level of exposure to prostate cancer related information is still insufficient among many men. Messages on other health issues such as diabetes and maternal health have enjoyed wide circulation through converged media platforms, while prostate cancer appears to receive less attention, thereby creating a troubling gap in public health education. Although various studies have examined media use for other health conditions, little research has focused on how converged media platforms shape awareness of prostate cancer within specific local communities. The gap becomes even more evident in Eket, where anecdotal observations suggest that many residents rely on a mixture of radio, television, newspapers and social media, yet their level of knowledge about prostate cancer remains low. This situation raises important questions about the adequacy, reach and effectiveness of media convergence in communicating prostate cancer issues. The absence of detailed empirical evidence on how converged media influence awareness within this locality creates a knowledge gap that this study seeks to address. The study is therefore necessary to assess the extent to which media convergence contributes to awareness of prostate cancer

issues among residents of Eket and to determine whether these channels are actively helping men to recognise symptoms, seek early screening and reduce the rising burden of the disease.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to:

- examine whether a significant proportion of Eket Residents are aware of Prostate cancer;
- determine whether media convergence creates awareness of prostate cancer in Eket;
- find out whether media convergence influence the awareness of prostate cancer among Eket Residents;
- ascertain the effectiveness of media convergence in influencing the awareness of prostate cancer among Eket residents;

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

- are a significant proportion of Eket Residents aware of Prostate cancer?
- Does media convergence create awareness of prostate cancer in Eket?
- Does media convergence influence the awareness of prostate cancer among Eket Residents?
- What is the effectiveness of media convergence in influencing the awareness of prostate cancer among Eket Residents?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted the Agenda Setting Theory and the Health Belief Model as the guiding theoretical foundation for examining how media convergence influences awareness of prostate cancer issues among residents of Eket. On the one hand, the Agenda Setting Theory, originally articulated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their Chapel Hill study of the 1970s, explains how the mass media influence the prominence that the public attaches to social issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The theory argues that the media may not always tell people what to think, but they significantly shape what people think about through repeated emphasis, placement and framing of particular subjects. Subsequent contributions by scholars such as Dearing and Rogers (1996) extended its propositions, stressing that media attention plays a decisive role in directing public attention towards specific concerns. The theory holds that persistent reportage makes certain issues more noticeable, allowing them to occupy central places in public conversation. Scholars (Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Stromer-Galley, 2014) have raised concerns about the theory's assumption that the media act as a unified force. They argue that the theory does not fully account for the differences among media organisations, audience backgrounds or societal influences that shape how messages are received (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Others such (Morah, 2022; Morah & Brown, 2025) contend that

the rise of digital technologies has altered the traditional power of the mainstream media in setting the public agenda, since online platforms now expand the number of information sources available to audiences.

The relevance of the Agenda Setting Theory to the present study stems from the recognition that awareness of prostate cancer cannot grow in a vacuum; it thrives when the media give consistent visibility to the issue. Media convergence, which makes it possible for radio, television, newspapers and digital platforms to circulate messages simultaneously, strengthens the potential for prostate cancer to receive heightened attention in public discourse. Persistent dissemination of prostate cancer messages across several channels creates an environment where men are more likely to notice the disease, recall its symptoms and appreciate the value of early screening. Programmes, talk shows, social media campaigns and news features collectively contribute to making prostate cancer a priority issue in the minds of the public. Oranusi (2019) observes that increased media emphasis can influence the number of men seeking screening, demonstrating the capacity of agenda setting to shape public health engagement. This theory therefore provides a strong foundation for examining how converged media platforms elevate prostate cancer awareness among the people of Eket.

On the other hand, the Health Belief Model (HBM), developed in the 1950s through the work of social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegels, remains one of the most influential frameworks for predicting health related behaviours. The model argues that individuals' actions towards a health concern are shaped by their perceptions of susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, cues to action and self-efficacy (Rosenstock, 1974). These constructs help explain why some people engage in preventive health practices while others delay or avoid them. The model has gained strong grounding in health communication research because it explains how beliefs and personal evaluations guide human choices. In matters of prostate cancer, men's likelihood of seeking screening or adopting preventive behaviour is shaped by how vulnerable they think they are, how serious they believe the disease could be, how beneficial they perceive early detection to be and how difficult they believe it is to access screening services. Media messages serve as powerful cues to action that can reinforce or weaken these perceptions.

Through media convergence, messages targeting different elements of the Health Belief Model can be distributed across multiple platforms, while allowing repetition and creative variation. Television documentaries may highlight the severity of prostate cancer. Radio programmes may reduce fear by explaining screening procedures. Social media campaigns may share testimonials that strengthen men's belief in the benefits of early detection, while newspaper articles may clarify barriers and possible solutions. Each

channel contributes to shaping how men perceive their risk and the steps they can take to protect themselves. Empirical evidence supports the usefulness of the model in promoting prostate cancer awareness. Kwok et al (2017), for instance, report that a health education campaign built around the Health Belief Model significantly enhanced knowledge and screening intentions among Nigerian men. Critics, however, point out that the model sometimes treats health behaviour as a product of individual decision making, without fully recognising structural constraints such as poverty, cultural beliefs or limited access to healthcare. Despite these criticisms, the model remains valuable for this study because it explains how converged media messages may shape personal health beliefs and encourage men in Eket to take responsible action regarding prostate cancer.

Conceptual Review

Media Coverage of Prostate Cancer in Nigeria

Prostate cancer remains underreported in many of Nigeria's mainstream media outlets, creating a serious obstacle to public awareness and early detection. A content-analysis study of two prominent Nigerian newspapers: The Guardian and Vanguard covering a six-month period in 2022 found that prostate cancer issues received limited coverage. Most of the stories (88 percent) were relegated to inside pages rather than front-page or feature prominence (Ezegwu, Obichili, Nwokeocha & Esther, 2022). The dominant format was straight news, which offered little depth or contextual guidance to readers about screening, prevention or resources. This pattern suggests that even when the media report prostate cancer, the placement and format diminish its visibility and potential public impact (Ezegwu et al., 2022). Such minimal coverage undermines the capacity of newspapers to raise urgency and attention about prostate cancer as a public health concern.

Findings from other parts of Nigeria reflect similar challenges. A survey among male staff of a secondary school in Southeast Nigeria revealed that even though respondents reported regular exposure to media messages about prostate cancer daily, weekly or monthly respondents' actual awareness level, knowledge and attitude indicators remained only moderately high (Ajibo, 2024). While the study observed some success in message dissemination, the regular exposure did not necessarily translate fully into informed understanding about risks, symptoms or the need for screening. This suggests that frequency of media exposure alone cannot guarantee effective public enlightenment, especially when messages lack depth or do not provide actionable guidance.

The limited and shallow coverage in mainstream print media, contrasted with modest gains through combined media exposure, emphasises the need for more strategic and sustained media engagement on

prostate cancer in Nigeria. There is an urgent need for media organisations to move beyond occasional reportage and adopt more consistent feature-length articles, editorial pieces, interviews with medical professionals, public service announcements, and follow-up stories. Such efforts would increase visibility, stimulate public discourse and encourage preventive behaviour. For contexts like Eket, which may share characteristics with the studied Nigerian communities, this review underscores the importance of examining how converged media platforms (including digital media) could be leveraged to compensate for the inadequacy of traditional print exposure.

Role of Converged Media (Broadcast, Print, Social Media) in Health Communication

Converged media where broadcast, print and online platforms work together to disseminate information has emerged as a potent mechanism to address public health information gaps in Nigeria. A recent study in Enugu State showed how social media significantly enhanced awareness of prostate cancer among urban respondents. The authors reported high levels of awareness, positive attitude towards early detection and increased willingness to adopt preventive behaviours (Onwe, Okoye, Asogwa & John, 2024). Use of social media allowed information about prostate cancer risk factors, symptoms and screening options to circulate widely and quickly among men who might otherwise have limited access to traditional health communication channels. This demonstrates that when leveraged properly, converged media can broaden reach and supplement traditional media gaps. Another example comes from a comprehensive survey in Kwara State, where researchers assessed how different health communication channels influenced knowledge, attitude and practice regarding prostate cancer. Findings indicated that radio and television users scored higher on knowledge about prostate cancer compared to those who relied primarily on the Internet or health professionals (Adedoyin, Adesina, Adeyeye, Amoo & Allo, 2023).

Interestingly, respondents who used the Internet as primary source showed higher practice (screening or intention) than those reliant on broadcast media. This suggests that different media channels may play varying roles in knowledge acquisition and behavioural change. Converged media offers a combination of these strengths the broad reach of radio/television, the depth of print and the interactivity and immediacy of digital platforms. Studies focusing on media-driven prostate cancer campaigns in Southeast Nigeria emphasize the utility of mixed media strategies. In research by Ikpeama, Ugochukwu-Oduh and Ikedichi (2025), participants reported high regularity of media access to prostate cancer information, strong interest in more information, and responsiveness to media campaigns across social media, electronic and print platforms. The campaign reportedly influenced men's health behaviour, including lifestyle adjustments and increased readiness to seek

screening (Ikpeama, Ugochukwu-Oduh & Ikedichi, 2025). This body of evidence suggests that converged media rather than any single medium might be most effective in improving prostate cancer awareness in Nigeria, especially when messages are consistently crafted and repeated across channels.

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Prostate Cancer Screening among Nigerian Men

Empirical investigations across several Nigerian states reveal troubling gaps between awareness, knowledge and actual screening practices of men. A community-based study in Ido-Ekiti, Ekiti State found that although 57.9 percent of men over 40 were aware of prostate cancer, 74.4 percent displayed poor knowledge about the disease and screening tests, and only 18.2 percent had ever undergone a screening (Adewoye, Aremu, Adegbiyi & Achebe, 2023). This indicates that awareness alone does not guarantee sufficient comprehension of risk factors, screening procedures or importance of early detection, nor does it ensure action. Healthcare workers in Southeastern Nigeria offer another illustrative instance. A study among staff in tertiary and mission hospitals in Anambra State showed nearly universal awareness of prostate cancer (97.5 percent) and broad knowledge of available screening methods (87.5 percent) (Tropical Journal of Medical Research, 2022). Despite this high professional awareness, actual participation in screening remains modest; only 55.0 percent recommended PSA testing from the age of 40, while 45.0 percent advised annual screening. Among those eligible, just over half had undergone a PSA test. The findings point to important structural and attitudinal barriers even among health-literate individuals. Reliability on knowledge alone appears insufficient to guarantee screening behaviour.

These patterns illustrate a persistent discrepancy between information exposure and health practice across Nigeria. Media campaigns and health communication efforts may raise awareness, yet knowledge may remain shallow and screening uptake remains low. This suggests that factors beyond media coverage such as access to health services, cultural attitudes, fear, social stigma, cost, and perceived barriers may mediate the translation of awareness into action. For research in Eket, this evidence underlines the need to examine not just exposure to converged media but also how the messages influence men's beliefs, attitudes and practices in local contexts.

Challenges and Limitations of Prostate Cancer Communication in Nigeria

Challenges in prostate cancer communication in Nigeria frequently stem from insufficient media commitment to sustained reporting. The analysis of newspaper coverage by Ezegwu et al. (2022) found that prostate cancer stories were not only rare but mainly placed in pages with minimal visibility, suggesting that editors and media houses may not regard prostate cancer

as a priority public health issue. Lack of editorial prioritisation undermines the ability of media to sustain public attention and to normalise conversations about prostate health. It also limits opportunities for repeated exposure which is critical for agenda building and public education.

Campaigns through converged media face additional limitations related to accessibility, social realities and message credibility. Research in Plateau State, for instance, revealed that although mainstream media platforms such as radio and television were frequently used for cancer communication, many respondents still preferred traditional channels such as religious gatherings and community networks for health information (Obateru, Akila, Bashok & Kazi, 2025). Such preference arises where trust in media or literacy levels are low, or where people feel more comfortable receiving sensitive health information in communal or culturally familiar settings. This preference means that even well-designed media campaigns may not reach the more vulnerable segments of society, especially in rural or semi-urban contexts.

Misinformation and message fatigue constitute further obstacles. Given that social media platforms carry a mix of credible and questionable health information, risk of misinformation increases. Although no specific Nigerian study on prostate-cancer misinformation is widely cited, global research warns that unverified treatment claims on social media may mislead vulnerable populations and discourage scientifically sanctioned screening or treatment (Ghenai & Mejova, 2018). When men are exposed to conflicting or sensationalised messages, their trust in legitimate health communication may erode. For a locality such as Eket, this challenge emphasises the necessity for media campaigns that are carefully structured, culturally sensitive, and supported by credible health institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey research design because it enabled the researchers to gather data on the opinions, attitudes and behaviours of respondents in Eket Local Government Area. The population comprised all male and female residents of Eket, projected from the 2006 census figure of 172,557 to 271,494.832 for the year 2025 using the Ownamalam population growth formula. From this population, a sample size of 399 was derived using the Taro Yamane formula as cited in Obasi (2013). The sampling procedure involved purposive selection of five densely populated roads in Eket, namely Afaha Eket, Okon Eket, Ikot Essien Road, Liverpool Road and Eket Oron Road, after which systematic random sampling was applied to select houses and two eligible respondents in each house. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 13 items divided into demographic and substantive sections.

The instrument was validated by communication experts to ensure clarity and relevance, while reliability was confirmed through a pilot test with 20 respondents in Oron Local Government Area who were not included in the main study. Out of 399 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 380 were correctly completed and returned, producing a return rate of 98 percent. Data were analysed using frequency tables and simple percentages, while the hypothesis was tested using the chi square goodness of fit.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Awareness of Prostate Cancer among Residents of Eket

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes, I am aware	246	65
No, I am not aware	134	35
Total	380	100

Table 1 above shows that prostate cancer awareness among residents of Eket is generally high, with 65% of respondents indicating awareness and 35% reporting no awareness. This pattern shows that while a majority of the population recognises prostate cancer as a health concern, a significant minority remains uninformed, pointing to a noticeable awareness gap within the community that may hinder early detection and effective prevention efforts.

Table 2: Media Sources through which Respondents Received Prostate Cancer Information

Media Source	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Radio	32	8
Television	86	23
Newspapers	29	8
Facebook	116	31
WhatsApp	47	12
Health Blogs/Websites	42	11
More than one medium	28	7
Total Responses	380	100

Table 2 highlights that Facebook (31%) and television (23%) are the leading sources of prostate cancer information among respondents, while WhatsApp (12%) and health websites (11%) also contribute notably, with radio and newspapers each accounting for only 8%. This pattern shows a clear tilt toward digital and broadcast platforms, implying that awareness campaigns will be more effective if strategically focused on social media and television, while traditional media may require strengthened engagement to broaden reach.

Table 3: Influence of Media Convergence on Awareness of Prostate Cancer

Level of Influence	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strong Influence	163	43
Moderate Influence	123	32
Weak Influence	52	14
No Influence	42	11
Total	380	100

The table highlights that media convergence strongly influences prostate cancer awareness among residents of Eket, with 43% of respondents reporting strong influence and 32% indicating moderate influence. Only 14% perceived weak influence, while 11% reported no influence at all. This suggests that integrating multiple media platforms can significantly enhance public awareness, implying that health communication strategies should leverage converged media channels to maximize outreach and effectively educate the population about prostate cancer.

Table 4: Respondents' Exposure Level across Converged Media Platforms

Exposure Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
High Exposure	138	36
Moderate Exposure	151	40
Low Exposure	63	17
No Exposure	28	7
Total	380	100

The table highlights that most respondents have moderate (40%) to high (36%) exposure to converged media platforms, while 17% report low exposure and 7% have no exposure at all. This pattern indicates that a majority of the population frequently engages with multiple media channels, implying that health campaigns delivered through converged media are likely to reach a wide audience, enhancing the effectiveness of prostate cancer awareness initiatives.

Table 5: Effectiveness of Media Convergence in Creating Awareness

Response Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	148	39
Effective	128	34
Slightly Effective	61	16
Not Effective	43	11
Total	380	100

The table highlights that media convergence is largely effective in creating awareness of prostate cancer, with 39% of respondents rating it as very effective and 34% as effective. Only 16% considered it slightly effective, and 11% viewed it as not effective. This suggests that the integration of multiple media channels

significantly enhances public awareness, implying that health communication strategies should continue to leverage converged media to maximize outreach and impact.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RQ1: Are a significant proportion of Eket residents aware of prostate cancer?

The findings of this study reveal that awareness of prostate cancer among residents of Eket is moderately high, though gaps remain. Table 1 shows that 65% of respondents indicated awareness of prostate cancer, while 35% reported no awareness. This pattern suggests that although a majority of the population recognises prostate cancer as a significant health concern, a notable minority remains uninformed, highlighting a persistent awareness gap. The implication is that health communication efforts, while reaching many, are still insufficiently comprehensive, leaving a sizable portion of the community vulnerable to late detection and poor outcomes. The high level of awareness among some residents may reflect the influence of prior media campaigns, health outreaches, or community health programs; however, the sizeable uninformed segment points to the need for more targeted, context-specific interventions. This aligns with observations in Nigerian studies, such as Ogundele and Ikuerowo (2015), which note that knowledge about prostate cancer remains uneven, and many men delay or avoid screening due to lack of information. Consequently, this finding underscores the importance of sustained public health education that ensures all demographic segments, particularly men over 40, are adequately informed about the disease.

RQ2: Does media convergence create awareness of prostate cancer in Eket?

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that media convergence plays a pivotal role in creating awareness of prostate cancer among residents. Facebook (31%) and television (23%) emerged as the leading sources of information, followed by WhatsApp (12%) and health blogs/websites (11%), while traditional media such as radio and newspapers contributed minimally (8% each). This pattern demonstrates that digital and broadcast platforms dominate the dissemination of health information, suggesting that converged media where multiple platforms operate synergistically can effectively reach diverse audiences. The implication is that health campaigns that integrate social media, television, print, and online platforms are likely to generate broader awareness than isolated efforts. Furthermore, the reliance on Facebook and other digital media reflects the growing digital penetration in urban and semi-urban Nigerian communities, including Eket. These findings corroborate studies by Onwe et al. (2024) and Ikpeama et al. (2025), which report that converged media strategies in Nigeria enhance message circulation, public engagement, and awareness of health issues. The practical implication is that health communicators should prioritize integrated

multi-platform strategies that combine the immediacy of social media, the credibility of television, and the depth of print media to maximize visibility and comprehension of prostate cancer information.

RQ3: Does media convergence influence the awareness of prostate cancer among Eket residents?

Table 3 highlights that media convergence has a strong influence on prostate cancer awareness, with 43% of respondents reporting strong influence and 32% indicating moderate influence. Only 14% perceived weak influence, and 11% reported no influence at all. These results suggest that exposure to multiple, interacting media channels significantly shapes public knowledge and attention toward prostate cancer. The implication is that the use of converged media where print, broadcast, and digital platforms reinforce each other, can strengthen public understanding and elevate the perceived importance of health issues. This aligns with the Agenda-Setting Theory, which posits that repeated and prominent media coverage increases the salience of particular topics in public consciousness (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Dearing & Rogers, 1996). The findings further suggest that the strategic deployment of converged media messages can influence men's likelihood of noticing symptoms, appreciating screening benefits, and seeking timely medical advice. The strong influence observed underscores the need for public health practitioners in Eket to leverage media convergence in structured campaigns that maximise both visibility and engagement.

RQ4: What is the effectiveness of media convergence in influencing the awareness of prostate cancer among Eket residents?

The data in Tables 4 and 5 indicate that media convergence is largely effective in influencing prostate cancer awareness. Table 4 shows that 40% of respondents have moderate exposure and 36% have high exposure to converged media platforms, suggesting frequent engagement with multiple channels. Table 5 shows that 39% rated media convergence as very effective and 34% as effective in creating awareness. These results imply that when messages are delivered across multiple platforms, they reinforce each other, increase reach, and enhance comprehension. The finding also highlights that frequent exposure is correlated with higher perceived effectiveness, emphasizing the value of repeated messaging across diverse media. This observation resonates with the Health Belief Model, which asserts that cues to action, such as consistent media messages, can positively influence health behavior (Rosenstock, 1974). The implication is that well-coordinated, multi-channel campaigns are more likely to encourage men to seek screening and adopt preventive measures, thereby addressing the knowledge-practice gap identified in previous Nigerian studies (Adewoye et al., 2023). In practical terms, the study confirms that integrating social media, television, radio, and print is a highly effective strategy for raising prostate cancer

awareness in Eket, making media convergence a crucial tool in public health education.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of media convergence in creating and influencing awareness of prostate cancer among residents of Eket. The findings indicate that while a significant proportion of residents are aware of prostate cancer, a notable segment remains uninformed, highlighting persistent awareness gaps that may hinder early detection and timely medical intervention. The study further reveals that converged media platforms, especially Facebook, television, WhatsApp, and health websites, play a pivotal role in disseminating information, reinforcing knowledge, and shaping public attitudes toward screening and preventive behaviors. Residents with higher exposure to multiple media platforms reported greater awareness and perceived effectiveness, suggesting that repeated and strategically coordinated messaging across digital, broadcast, and print media strengthens public understanding of the disease. The study concludes that media convergence is an effective mechanism for promoting prostate cancer awareness in Eket; however, gaps in coverage and the uneven reach of messages indicate the need for more deliberate, sustained, and culturally contextualised health communication strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Public health agencies and local government authorities in Eket should intensify community outreach programmes to target the 35% of residents who remain unaware of prostate cancer. Strategies could include health talks, town hall meetings, and the distribution of informational materials in workplaces, markets, and religious centers to ensure that awareness reaches all demographic groups.
- Health communicators should leverage converged media by integrating social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp), television, radio, newspapers, and health blogs in coordinated campaigns. This approach ensures that awareness messages reach diverse audiences effectively, taking advantage of both digital immediacy and traditional media credibility.
- Media organisations and public health institutions should design converged media content that not only informs but also engages audiences. Messages should be structured to reinforce the importance of early detection, explain symptoms, and address misconceptions. Interactive campaigns such as live social media Q&A sessions, television talk shows, and radio call-in programs could increase the influence of media convergence on public knowledge and attitudes.

- To maximise effectiveness, health campaigns should prioritize repeated exposure across multiple platforms, ensuring consistent messaging over time. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be implemented to track reach, comprehension, and impact on screening intentions. Special focus should be given to tailoring content for high-risk groups, such as men over 40, to bridge the gap between awareness and actual preventive action.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes several key contributions to the existing body of knowledge on health communication and prostate cancer awareness in Nigeria:

1. It provides empirical evidence on the role of media convergence in enhancing awareness of prostate cancer within a semi-urban Nigerian community, demonstrating the effectiveness of multi-platform communication in shaping knowledge, attitudes, and practices.
2. It highlights digital and broadcast media as the most influential channels, emphasizing the shift from traditional media dominance to a more converged, interactive model for health communication in local contexts.
3. It bridges the knowledge gap regarding the awareness-practice discrepancy by showing that exposure to media messages alone does not guarantee screening behaviors, underscoring the need for integrated strategies that address cultural, social, and structural barriers.
4. It advances theoretical application by combining Agenda Setting Theory and Health Belief Model in a Nigerian setting, demonstrating how converged media can both elevate issue salience and serve as cues to action that motivate preventive health behaviors.
5. The study provides context-specific insights for Eket, offering actionable data for policymakers, health educators, and media practitioners seeking to design locally relevant and effective prostate cancer awareness interventions.

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