

## **Strategies Adopted by Homemakers in Managing Home Accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State**

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### **Abstract**

*The home, which ideally is a place of safety and comfort, is accident-prone due to the activities of home makers and household members. This paper focused on ways home makers manage home accidents. It adopted a survey research design and it was conducted among households in Nsukka Local Government Area. A sample of 100 home makers was used in the study. Validated questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Mean was used to analyze the data collected. Major findings include, among others: that different accidents occur in the home such as fall, fire outbreak, choking; that these accidents can be attributed to carelessness, lack of skill and poor maintenance of facilities. It was recommended, among others, that home makers should label containers, keep containers out of the reach of children, spills should be cleaned and that each home should have a first aid box handy.*

**Keywords:** Home, Accident, Management, Adoption, Household, Equipment

### **1. Introduction**

An important factor for a happy home is sound health. Health is considered by many in terms of effective and enjoyable physical and emotional environment. Unfortunately, many people consider disease which is a harmful departure from normal health, as the only determinant of health [1]. This is far from true. All the aspects of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing must be complete in the human being for anybody to be considered healthy. Injuries and departure from wellness resulting from accident are not to be overlooked as forms of departure from sound health.

Udoh, [2] emphasized that of all the problems that result in human discomfort, injury, disability and death; accidents are in a class of their own. Human beings are always interacting with the environment and this exposes man to various forms of hazards leading to accidents. Accidents are described as unplanned event that can lead to injury, damage to facilities and even loss of life.

Generally, accidents are usually preceded by unsafe acts and produce undesirable effects. Accidents occur everywhere but prominent among them is home accident. This can be attributed to the amount of time spent at home. Home accidents may also lead to loss of body part (limbs) or result to death and incapacitation. According to [3] no environment is completely devoid of accident since they are observed in all categories of life. The home maker quite often does not only live in an unsafe environment, but also uses various objects and materials, many of which can be hazardous when not properly used and handed.

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According to Todd [4] injuries as a result of accident are the fourth leading cause of death among people of all ages. Accident and injuries can happen anytime and anywhere, coming in different forms. Home accidents happen in particular stressful situation and are also causes of anxiety and fear. According to [5] many of the accidents involving the home makers may be said to occur as a result of ignorance or poor practices on the part of the home maker. Most home accidents are as a result of carelessness, poor facilities etc.

Though more comfort now exists in the modern world, some dangers accompany this optimal condition in which man must live. Improper use of modern home appliances have jeopardized the health and life of household members. It is therefore important that homemakers be aware of the inherent dangers in improper use of household appliances.

This is because home accidents affect all age groups. However, the age group suffering the highest accident rates in the home is children under 5 years and elderly people 65 years of age and above. A large part of these accidents that result in non-fatal injuries are referred to as home, non-occupational accidents [6]. Contrary to common opinion, the home is one of the most dangerous places to be. Some of the accidents that occur here result in more deaths and serious injuries than do accidents on streets, highways and schools. Backing this assertion, [7] pointed out that each year 27,000 to 30,000 people die in home accident, while over 4,000,000 are disabled and the cost including wage loss, medical expense and insurance go up to 800,000,000 dollars in the United States.

The phrase “in the safety of your home” has become a myth [8] because even when safety practices and attitudes are learnt in the places of work, on roads and other places they are often not carried into the home. Accidents occur in the home as a result of the various activities that goes on in the home and how these activities are carried out by the home makers [9]. Poor work attitude and habits of home makers has been identified as some of the causes of home accidents. Others include inadequate knowledge or lack of awareness of the need for safety precautions, unsafe behavior, and insufficient skill on the part of the home maker [10]. Many home makers are poor time mangers and carry out household chores carelessly with its attendant consequences that may be very costly. At times, home makers do not follow the manufacturer’s instruction before operating household appliances and this can cause serious accidents.

Proper management and planning is therefore needed in carrying out household chores and use of household appliances and facilities. In the opinion of [11] defined management as the act of creating an environment in which people could perform as individual and yet co-operate toward the attainment of group goals. Management is essential in all organized co-operation, as well as in the home. Management also may be viewed as a responsibility for achieving desired objectives. This requires the selection of the means to accomplish the prescribed goals and which employed some degree of rationality in the allocation of resources. Proper management implies that it is the responsibility of a home maker to rationally select the means and resources that would accomplish the desirable objectives of home making. Acques [12] viewed management as a skillful treatment to control the movement or behavior of individual to direct to success, in accomplishing and carrying on a business management. Management, therefore, involves planning of activity to be done, organizing, controlling the human and non-human resources employed in achieving predetermined goals. In order to reduce if not eliminate accident in the home, it is necessary that the home makers are adequately prepared in the act of home management. It is on these premises that the present study is being undertaken.

In Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, different types of accidents occur in homes. When the home makers are involved in an accident, whether in the home or elsewhere, it can keep them miserable for a considerable length of time, even permanently, which adversely affects other members of the family, especially children. When a home maker is involved in a home accident, it can deprive other family members

of the services of that home maker especially if the homemaker involved is in the hospital or bedridden [13].

In most homes where the home maker is dead, the children would be faced with serious social problems like molestation, child abuse, among others. Apart from death, treatment of accident victim is costly and consumes family resources of time, money, and energy. Treatment of injured family members is usually costly. Scarce family resources are often used to pay hospital bill depriving the family of meeting other needs. The cost of treating accident victims involves huge financial expenditure for health care systems [14].

This study is very relevant because it will help to determine the different types of home accident, causes of home accident, and management strategies for improvement in coping with home accident. This will go a long way toward reducing home accidents. This study will therefore be useful to home makers, families and society, especially households in Nsukka L.G.A. It will achieve these by providing more insight into ways of managing home accidents. The present study therefore is an attempt to find out the strategies adopted by home makers in managing home accident in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Specifically, the study identified:

- i. Types of accidents that occur in homes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.
- ii. Cause of home accident in which home makers are involved, in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.
- iii. Strategies currently adopted by home makers in managing home accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.
- iv. Ways of improving the management of home accident in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Design of the Study**

This study was conducted using survey research design. Survey was used because this study elicited information from home makers and their responses were used to make judgments on the ways home accidents can be managed in Nsukka.

### **2.2. Area of the Study**

This study was conducted in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Nsukka is a town situated at 6<sup>o</sup>51'N and 7<sup>o</sup>23'E of the equator on the hills of Udi which extend its frontiers to the northern parts of the state. It is one of the hearts of the Nsukka Local Government Area and bounded by other Local Government Areas such Igbo Eze North and Udeno on the North and East respectively. As at 2007, Nsukka zone had estimated population of 1,377,001. Nsukka Local Government Area has an Area of 1,810km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 309,633 at 2006 census. The town is the site of the University of Nigeria. It is the home to members of the Igbo ethnic group. Majority of women in Nsukka community live with their husband and children. Nsukka was chosen because cases of home accident seem to be on the increase in the area. This is seen in the reports from hospitals on the casualties being hospitalized due to home accidents.

### **2.3. Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprised of estimated number of households residing in Nsukka Local Government. It is estimated that 1000 households reside in the locality.

#### **2.4. Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A stratified random sample was used to select the home-makers. A total of 100 respondents were selected from the ten towns that make up the Local government Area. A stratum of home-makers from urban rural communities was used.

#### **2.5. Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire. It was developed by the researchers through extensive review of literature based on the purpose of the study. The questionnaire has four sections (A - D) corresponding with the specific purposes of the study. Section A sought for data on the accidents that occur in homes in the study area. Section B was on the causes of accidents that occur in homes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Section C sought information on the strategies employed by home-makers in the management of home accident. Section D elicited information on the ways to enhance the management of home accidents in the area.

#### **2.6. Validation of the Instrument**

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts from the Department of Vocational Teacher Education (Home Economics section) University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The expert examined critically items in the draft instrument with specific purposes of the study and made suggestions that were used to correct the final copy of the instrument.

#### **2.7. Reliability of the Instrument**

To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cranach alpha reliability coefficient of .92 was used and a coefficient which is high enough was established. This showed that the instrument was consistent in measuring what is supposed to measure.

#### **2.8. Method of Data Collection**

The researcher administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondent with the help of three trained research assistants (RA). These research assistants assisted the researcher to distribute and explain the content of the instrument to the respondents. For non-literate home-makers the items was verbally interpreted in vernacular. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. All questionnaires were filled and administered to the respondent. All questionnaires were filled and returned within a period of one week, representing a return rate of 100 percent.

#### **2.9. Method of Data Analysis**

The data generated from the respondent were analyzed using frequency and mean to answer each of the four research questions. Any items with mean score greater than or equal to 3.0 were considered as agreed upon while any item with mean score below 3.0 were considered as disagreed upon by respondents.

### **3. Results**

#### **Research Question 1**

What are the accidents that occur in homes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State? Table 1 presents the data for answering Research Question 1

**Table 1. Mean Responses of Home-Makers on Types of Accidents that Occur in Homes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State**

S/N	Types Of Home Accidents	X	Remarks
1	Fire outbreak	3.61	Agree
2	Food poisoning occurs frequently at home	3.95	Agree
3	Waist pain as a result of bad posture	2.39	Disagree
4	Suffocation is a common type of accident that occur at home	3.54	Agree
5	Electric shock is rampant at home	3.85	Agree
6	Cuts occur at any given time in home	3.95	Agree
7	Choking is a serious type of accident which occurs in most homes to home-makers	3.88	Agree
8	Home-makers have burns and scalds mostly at home	3.72	Agree
9	Falls in homes can result to fracture of the bone	3.42	Agree
10	Bruises are the commonest home accident which occurs to home-makers	2.90	Disagree
11	Inhaling of poisonous fumes from generator	3.15	Agree
12	Swallowing of pins and other objects	2.58	Disagree

Note: Items with means score 3.0 and above were considered as agreed upon while items with means below 3.0 were disagreed upon.

Out of 12 items in the Table 1, 9 had their means above the cut-off point of 3.0. It therefore showed that all the 0 items were types of home accidents. However, 3 items out of 12 had their means below the cut-off point of 3.0 giving an indication that the respondents do not quite agree that 3 items are types of accidents that occur at home.

### Research Question 2

What are the causes of accidents that occur in homes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu state? Table 2 presented that data for answering Research Question 2.

**Table 2. Means Responses of Home-makers on Causes of Accidents in Homes in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State**

S/N	CAUSE OF HOME ACCIDENTS	X	REMARKS
13	Lack of maintenance of household appliances	3.91	Agree
14	Over-use of equipment in the kitchen	4.01	Agree
15	Non labeling of food items	3.91	Agree
16	Inability of home-makers to repair broken furniture	3.41	Agree
17	Carelessness in handing of kerosene stove, gas, cooker etc by household members.	3.09	Agree
18	Placing electric generator at wrong places or position where it emits fumes that may lead to choking, fire outbreak	3.90	Agree
19	Insufficient lighting in homes causes accident in homes.	3.51	Agree
20	Poor supervision of children during work and play.	2.40	Disagree
21	Lack of knowledge and skill in using gas cooker and other household appliances.	1.91	Disagree
22	Being in a haste in doing household chores	3.22	Agree
23	Carrying out unplanned activities at home	3.45	Agree
24	Lack of operational skills in using household appliances	2.10	Disagree
25	Inability to read and follow instructional manual	2.88	Disagree
26	Leaving peels and spilled liquids on the floor	3.01	Agree
27	Delay on repair of electric appliance	2.05	Disagree
28	Lack of skill in the use of kitchen equipment	3.15	Agree
29	Poor provision of good ventilation in the home	3.35	Agree

Table 2 revealed that respondents disagree on 5 items out of 17 items, while they agree on the items as causes of home accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Note: Items with means score 3.0 and were considered as agreed upon while items below 3.0 were disagreed upon.

### Research Question 3

What strategies are employed by home-makers in the management of home accident in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State? Table 3 presented the data for answering this research Question

**Table 3. Mean Responses of Home-makers on Strategies to be Employed by Home-makers in the Management of Home Accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State**

S/N	Strategies to be Employed by Home-Makers	X	Remarks
30	Warning notice against dangerous area should be provided by the Home-makers	3.10	Agree
31	Reading safety and accident prevention books by home-makers	3.50	Agree
32	Home-makers should abide by safety rules and regulation in use of household appliances	3.76	Agree
33	Development of attitudes, habits and skills which will help in safeguarding lives by home-makers	3.03	Agree
34	Safety education should be given to home-makers	3.25	Agree
35	Immediate and adequate repair of faulty equipment at home	3.90	Agree
36	Removal of faulty equipment at home	3.08	Agree
37	Home-makers should avoid slippery floors by keeping the floor clean	3.43	Agree
38	Cracked plates should be thrown away to avoid accident	3.34	Agree
39	Home-makers should plan their kitchen	3.06	Agree
40.	Drugs, Chemical cleaning agents and other chemicals used in the home should be kept where children cannot reach them.	3.02	Agree

The respondents agreed on all the items in the Table 3 as strategies employed by home makers in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

### Research Question 4

What are the ways to enhance the management of home accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State? Table 4 presented the data for answering research Question 4.

**Table 4. Means Responses of Home-makers in Ways to Enhance the Management of Home Accident in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State**

<b>Management of Home Accidents</b>			
<b>40</b>	First aid box should be provided the in home	<b>3.05</b>	Agree
<b>41</b>	Bushes around the home should be cut down	<b>3.45</b>	Agree
<b>42</b>	Bucket of sand or fire extinguishers should be provided in the home	<b>3.01</b>	Agree
<b>43</b>	Home-makers should organize their work to guard against home Accidents	<b>3.85</b>	Agree
<b>44</b>	Good working environment should be provided for home-makers in the homes	<b>3.15</b>	Agree
<b>45</b>	Faulty appliances should be repaired to avoid accidents in the home	<b>3.55</b>	Agree

The respondents agreed on all the items in Table 4 as ways to enhance the management of home accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

#### **4. Findings of the Study**

The following findings were made from the study

1. The respondents agreed on 9 items as types of accidents that occur in the home. Some of these includes, fire outbreak, suffocation, cuts from objects, choking, falls, food poisoning, scalds and burns etc.
2. The respondents agreed on 12 items as causes of home accidents in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Among these are lacks of maintenance of home appliances, over-crowding of equipment in the kitchen, carelessness, insufficient lighting, lack of skills in the use of kitchen equipment, carrying out unplanned activities etc.
3. The respondents agreed on all the 10 items as strategies to be employed by home-makers in the management of home accidents.
4. It was identified that the following ways will enhance the management of home accidents and reduce home accident by home-makers: first aid box should be provided in homes, bushes around the home should be cut down, bucket of sand or fire extinguishers should be provided in the homes, faulty appliances should be repaired to avoid accident in the home, and good working environment should be provided for home-makers in the homes.

#### **5. Discussion**

One of the major findings of the study is that cuts from objects are the major type of accidents that home-makers are involved in. The home-makers should be conscious of the need to be very careful and master the skills of what she wants to do. This revelation clearly supports the observation of Florio [15]. He indicated that failure to recognize potential hazard due to cuts on the skin is a major type of accidents that occurs in the home. [16] indicated that types of home accident which the home-makers are involved in are suffocation, burns, drug and food poisoning, cuts, fall, fire accident, bruises and electric shocks.

On the causes of home accident in which home-makers are involved as presented in Table 2, it was discovered that insufficient lighting, leaving peels on the floor, lacks of

skills, poor ventilation, carelessness, faulty equipment has led to many accident. Unsafe practices in and around the homes make the home an accident prone environment . Such practices as; unsafe cooking methods, heating and lightening, among others take their toll on lives of household members. The major causes of home accidents are falls [17]. It has been observed that fluids spilled on the floor, food peels left on the floor may be slippery and a home-maker who mistakenly steps on these is prone to fall. Also [16] noted that poor skill, inadequate or faulty equipment is causes of home accident. He further noted that tiredness, carelessness, lack of practice and lack of knowledge are contributory factors to the number of reported home accidents.

The strategies to be employed by home-makers in management of home accident as shown in the Table 3 include safety education to be given to home-makers. This relates to Nwaeze, Okafor and Iloerika [19] who stated that safety education and accidents preventions develop an understanding of responsibility in prevention and control of accident in the home.

From the findings also, it was identified that some homes adopted many ways to enhance the management of home accident. This observation was supported by [15] who noted that essential principle of preventing accidents is to remove unnecessary hazard such as family equipment, slippery floor and to provide good working environment. Finally, for households to enjoy maximum safety in the homes sources of accidents must be identified and deliberate efforts made by family members at preventing them [9].

## 6. Conclusion

From the findings, the conclusion drawn are as follows

- a. The types of home accident in which home-makers are involved are fire outbreak, suffocation, cuts from objects, choking, falls, scalds and burns, food poisoning electric shock and inhaling of poisonous fumes.
- b. Lack of maintenance of home appliances, over-crowding of equipment in the kitchen, carelessness, insufficient lighting, inability of labeling food items, faulty equipment, lack of knowledge and patience, carrying out unplanned activates are causes of home accidents involving home makers.
- c. The strategies to be employed by home-makers to reduce accidents includes-reading safety and accident prevention books, abiding to home safety rules and regulations, removal of faulty equipment as well as avoiding slippery floors by home-makers.
- d. The following ways enhance the management of home accident by home-makers-providing buckets of sand or fire extinguishers, repairing faulty equipment and also providing good working environment for the home-makers.

## 7. Implication of the Study

The findings of this study have implications for the home-makers, Home Economics teachers and society in general. Home-makers should be aware of types and causes of home accidents from the findings and try as much as possible to prevent home accidents.

Adult educators, home economist extension workers such as welfare officers should utilize the findings of this study when teaching home-makers or their students on home accidents.

Home-makers should endeavor to put into practices the safety and preventive ways mentioned on this study as this will help reduce or eliminate home accidents.

The study has implication for home economics curriculum planners for primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The findings can be incorporated into family education programs of institutions that prepares future home-makers.

## 8. Recommendation for Action

Most of the accidents involving home-makers may be said to occur as a result of ignorance and poor practice on the home-makers. The researchers recommends the following:

- a. Homes should be properly ventilated and lighted.
- b. Government should enforce a decree that requires every home to have fire extinguishers
- c. Safety education and accident prevention should be emphasized on radios, books and television as this will help reduce home accidents.
- d. Drugs, chemicals and food stuff should be properly labeled and should not be stored in one cupboard.
- e. Health centers should be built in strategic positions and places by government.
- f. Bushes around the homes should be cut down.
- g. Broken bottles and sharp objects should be kept in safe places to avoid accidents.

## 9. Suggestions for Further Research

1. Since this study was limited to Nsukka Local Government Area, the researchers thereby suggest that a similar research be carried out on other local government areas of Enugu state.
2. A survey of home accident involving pre-school children should be carried out.
3. The researcher suggest that a study be carried out on accidents in industries existing in Nsukka Metropolis
4. Accident involving secondary school students in the dormitory in a named school should be carried out.

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