A baseline study of primary school teachers’ awareness and knowledge about autism among primary school pupils in Osun State: Implications for counseling

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A survey research design was used to assess the awareness and knowledge about autism among a sample of 520 male and female primary school teachers in Osun State. The teachers were made up of 320 female and 200 male teachers whose age range between 28 years and 45 years old. School from which the teachers were selected for the study was stratified to reflect both rural and urban communities and the complex cultural demographic composition of the pupils taught by the teachers. Two research instruments were developed for the study: The first was to collect information about the teachers’ demographic background, qualification and experience, the second instrument titled ‘awareness and knowledge about autism’ (TAKAA) contains 10 items aimed at assessing teachers awareness and knowledge about autism among their pupils. In addition a preliminary structural and content analyses of the teachers education curricula was made to determine the nature of the teachers’ professional preparation. Results showed that primary school teachers awareness of autism was very low (3%) among female and 4% among male teachers and their knowledge was only 4% among female and 4.5% among male teachers. The result was attributed to the lack of relevance of curricula for professional preparation, lack of effective professional counseling and absence of frequent in-service training of and for primary school teachers in counseling. Appropriate recommendations were made both for updating the curricula and training for teachers’ preparation and for effective counseling of teachers on autism and related issues.

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