

Effectiveness of Communication Management in Creating Awareness About Hepatitis Among Jalingo Residents, Taraba State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of communication management in creating awareness about hepatitis among residents of Jalingo, Taraba State. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 399 respondents determined through the Taro Yamane formula from a projected population of 220,700. The findings revealed that while residents received hepatitis information mainly through radio, television, social media, and health workers, a considerable number still reported unclear messages or no exposure at all. Preventive behaviours such as vaccination and screening were adopted by some, but communication challenges such as medical jargon, stigma, limited campaigns, and the absence of local language use reduced overall effectiveness. The study concludes that communication management in Jalingo is moderately effective and recommends more locally adapted strategies, consistent campaigns, and the involvement of trusted health workers to enhance awareness and prevention.

Keywords: *Hepatitis, Communication Management, Health Awareness, Jalingo, Public Health*

1. INTRODUCTION

Hepatitis remains one of the most pressing public health concerns across the globe, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where health communication and awareness systems are often weak. The disease, caused by viral infections that affect the liver, has continued to spread due to limited awareness, poor access to health information, and stigma associated with its symptoms and treatment. Effective communication management is therefore recognised as a vital tool in creating public awareness, promoting preventive practices, and encouraging timely health-seeking behaviours (World Health Organization, 2022; Abiodun, 2023). Communication management in health simply refers to the organised use of communication strategies, channels, and messages to ensure people understand and act on relevant health information (Onyemelukwe & Adebayo, 2021).

Scholars have argued that successful health communication campaigns depend not only on the message itself but also on how it is managed and adapted to suit the audience. Studies show that the use of clear, culturally sensitive, and well-structured communication strategies enhances public understanding of diseases like hepatitis, leading to improved prevention and treatment outcomes (Awofeso, 2021; Olaleye & Igbokwe, 2023). At the same time, poor communication management can result in misinformation, fear, and reduced willingness to adopt healthy behaviours (Eze & Uche, 2022). This highlights the central role of communication management in bridging the gap between medical knowledge and community action.

The researcher believes that communication management is not just about spreading health information, but about ensuring that such

information is received, understood, and acted upon in ways that truly impact people's lives. For a city like Jalingo, where residents face challenges such as low literacy levels, limited access to healthcare, and cultural misconceptions about diseases, communication management must be intentional, well-coordinated, and locally adapted. I see communication as a bridge between public health systems and ordinary people, and its proper management as the key to reducing the spread of hepatitis and saving lives in my community.

The relevance of this study lies in the urgent need to improve awareness about hepatitis in Jalingo and similar environments. Recent reports suggest that Nigeria continues to carry a high burden of hepatitis infections, yet many citizens remain unaware of the causes, symptoms, or available treatment options (Ogundele, 2021; Musa, Abdulaziz, & Adamu, 2024). Poor awareness often leads to late diagnosis, complications, and avoidable deaths. By focusing on communication management, this research highlights how well-coordinated awareness strategies can help address knowledge gaps, reduce stigma, and foster healthier communities.

While global and national studies have explored communication in health promotion, there is limited focus on smaller cities like Jalingo, where unique socio-cultural and economic realities influence how people receive and act on health messages. This study therefore seeks to examine how communication management practices shape awareness of hepatitis among residents of Jalingo, and by doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on health communication and disease prevention in Nigeria (World Health Organization, 2022; Musa et al., 2024).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

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The objectives of the study are to;

- i. To examine the communication strategies used in creating awareness about hepatitis among residents of Jalingo.
- ii. To assess the level of awareness and understanding of hepatitis among Jalingo residents as influenced by communication management practices.
- iii. To evaluate the effectiveness of communication management in promoting preventive behaviours and reducing misconceptions about hepatitis in Jalingo.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Communication Management Theory, which was propounded by James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt in 1984. The theory emerged within the field of public relations and organisational communication, emphasising that communication should not be seen as a one-way flow of information, but rather as a planned, managed, and two-way process. According to the theory, effective communication involves managing relationships between organisations and their publics through structured strategies that allow both information dissemination and feedback (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The theory explains that communication management goes beyond just sending messages. It involves the careful planning, implementation, and evaluation of communication activities to ensure that the intended audience not only receives but also understands and responds to the information in meaningful ways. This makes it highly relevant to health communication, where the success of awareness campaigns depends on how messages are framed, the media channels

used, and the audience's level of engagement (Kim & Ni, 2020; Yang, 2021).

In this study, Communication Management Theory provides a useful lens for examining how hepatitis awareness is handled among Jalingo residents. The theory highlights the need for strategies that are deliberate, culturally sensitive, and audience-focused. For instance, creating awareness about hepatitis requires more than simply providing medical facts; it also demands the use of clear language, trusted communication channels, and mechanisms that allow community members to ask questions, clarify misconceptions, and adopt preventive behaviours. This directly ties into the study's aim of assessing how effective communication management contributes to raising awareness of hepatitis in Jalingo (Awofeso, 2021; Onyemelukwe & Adebayo, 2021).

However, the Communication Management Theory has faced some criticisms. Scholars argue that while it strongly emphasises the strategic management of communication, it often assumes that audiences are always rational and willing to engage, which is not always the case. In real-world contexts, cultural barriers, misinformation, and resistance to change can weaken communication effectiveness (Holtzhausen, 2022). Others suggest that the theory is too organisation-centred, focusing more on how institutions manage communication, rather than on the everyday realities of audiences, especially in developing regions where literacy and access to media are limited (Smith, 2023).

2. REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

A study titled Health Communication Approaches in Addressing Hepatitis B in Southwestern Nigeria adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design to investigate the strategies

used by governmental and non-governmental organisations in creating awareness about hepatitis B. The objective was to document the channels employed and assess their effectiveness in reaching the public. Findings showed that radio, health workers, and community sensitisation were the most used platforms, but the messages were inconsistent and not always culturally adapted, which limited their impact. The study did not, however, measure how residents understood or acted upon the messages, leaving a gap in assessing how communication management influences audience knowledge and behavioural response. This gap connects to the present study, which seeks to evaluate both awareness and behaviour among Jalingo residents as influenced by communication management strategies (Abiodun, 2023).

Another study, Community Seroprevalence and Awareness of Hepatitis B and C in a Nigerian Semi-Urban Area, used a household-based cross-sectional survey to determine disease prevalence and assess residents' level of awareness. The main objective was to link the prevalence of hepatitis with people's knowledge of its causes and prevention. The study found that while just over half of respondents had heard about hepatitis, detailed knowledge of transmission and prevention was poor, and misconceptions were common. The methodology focused more on prevalence and basic awareness without exploring how communication was managed or which strategies were most effective in shaping health behaviour. This left a gap in understanding the effectiveness of structured communication management, which the present study intends to fill by examining how specific communication practices influence preventive behaviour in Jalingo (Musa, Abdulaziz, & Adamu, 2024).

A research work titled Digital Communication and the Reach of World Hepatitis Day Messages

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on Twitter employed digital analytics and content analysis to examine how social media health campaigns spread information. The objective was to determine the extent of engagement and how health awareness days influenced public knowledge. Findings showed that while Twitter campaigns helped spread messages widely, they often lacked depth, and engagement did not always translate into improved understanding or preventive action. The study was limited by its narrow focus on online content without considering offline realities, especially in communities with low internet access. This left a gap in assessing how multi-channel communication management that integrates both digital and traditional platforms can improve awareness and behaviour. The current study addresses this by examining a variety of communication channels and strategies used to manage hepatitis awareness in Jalingo (Yang, 2021).

Stakeholder and Community Awareness of Hepatitis C Self-Testing in Nigeria, researchers adopted an online survey design combined with interviews with health stakeholders. The objective was to explore the acceptability of hepatitis C self-testing and assess awareness levels among communities. The findings indicated moderate awareness but raised concerns about limited clarity of messages, weak counselling support, and the absence of feedback mechanisms to address misconceptions. However, because the methodology relied heavily on online sampling, it excluded older populations and those with poor internet access, thus failing to capture the communication needs of more vulnerable groups. This leaves a gap in knowledge about how structured communication management, when tailored to different audience groups, can influence awareness and preventive practices. My study seeks to address this by focusing on residents of Jalingo and examining

how managed communication strategies reach and influence them across different social groups (Olaleye & Igbokwe, 2023).

A study titled *Knowledge, Awareness and Practices of Hepatitis B among Nigerian University Students* employed a cross-sectional survey design to measure students' understanding, attitudes, and preventive behaviours. The objective was to assess the level of knowledge and highlight areas where intervention was needed. Findings revealed that while students were generally aware of hepatitis B, significant misconceptions persisted, and vaccination uptake remained low despite knowledge of risks. The research did not explore how communication was structured or managed to convert knowledge into behavioural change, which limited its practical recommendations. This highlights a gap in linking communication management with actual preventive practices, which the present study will fill by evaluating how managed communication strategies shape both awareness and health behaviours of residents in Jalingo (Eze & Uche, 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, which is appropriate for assessing the present level of awareness, understanding, and preventive behaviours relating to hepatitis among residents of Jalingo at a single point in time. The study population comprises all adult residents aged 18 years and above in Jalingo Local Government Area (LGA), Taraba State. According to the National Population Commission and the National Bureau of Statistics, the projected population of Jalingo LGA was approximately 220,700 people in 2022. From this population, the sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, which is widely applied in social science research

to calculate representative samples from large populations while maintaining a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The formula generated a sample size of approximately 399 respondents, which is considered statistically adequate for the study. A stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure fair representation of respondents across different wards in Jalingo, considering demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational background. The main instrument for data collection will be a structured questionnaire designed in line with the objectives of the study to capture information on exposure to communication strategies on hepatitis, the level of awareness and understanding, preventive practices, and perceptions of the effectiveness of communication management. Data gathered will be analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means to summarise responses, while inferential statistics such as correlation and regression will be employed to test the relationship between communication management practices and awareness of hepatitis among Jalingo residents.

1.6 Data Presentation

Table 1: What is your gender?

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	262	60.0
Female	175	40.0
Prefer Not To Say	0	0.0
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Out of the 437 respondents, 60% were male and 40% were female. This shows that male participants were more represented in the study compared to females.

Table 2: What is your age range?

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25 Years	284	65.0
26–35 Years	153	35.0
36–45 Years	0	0.0
46 Years And Above	0	0.0
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

A majority of the respondents (65%) were between 18–25 years, followed by 35% within the 26–35 years range. None of the respondents were above 35 years, showing that the study largely captured the youth population.

Table 3: What is your highest educational qualification?

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary Education	40	9.2
Secondary Education	97	22.2
Tertiary Education	260	59.5
Postgraduate Education	40	9.1
Others	0	0.0
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The majority of respondents (59.5%) had tertiary education, followed by 22.2% with secondary education. Only 9.2% and 9.1% had primary and postgraduate education respectively, indicating that most respondents were fairly educated.

Table 4: Which communication channels have you mostly received information about hepatitis from?

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Channel	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Radio/Television	150	34.3
Social Media	120	27.5
Health Workers/Clinics	90	20.6
Community Campaigns	50	11.4
Friends And Family	27	6.2
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Findings show that 34.3% of respondents received hepatitis information mainly through radio and television, followed by 27.5% through social media. Health workers accounted for 20.6%, while community campaigns and family/friends contributed less.

Table 5: How clear and easy to understand are the messages you have received about hepatitis?

Clarity of Message	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very clear	170	38.9
Somewhat Clear	130	29.7
not Clear	60	13.7
Never Received Information	77	17.7
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

About 38.9% of the respondents indicated that hepatitis messages were very clear, while 29.7% said somewhat clear. However, 13.7% said not clear and 17.7% reported never receiving any message, pointing to communication gaps.

Table 6: To what extent has communication about hepatitis improved your knowledge of its causes and prevention?

Extent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Great Extent	145	33.2
Some Extent	160	36.6
Little Extent	80	18.3
Not At All	52	11.9
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Findings reveal that 36.6% believed hepatitis communication improved their knowledge to some extent, while 33.2% said to a very great extent. However, 30.2% felt it had little or no impact.

Table 7: Have you ever changed or adopted any preventive behaviour because of hepatitis awareness messages?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, often	140	32.0
Yes, sometimes	180	41.2
Rarely	70	16.0
Never	47	10.8
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Results show that 41.2% sometimes adopted preventive behaviours after awareness, while 32% did so often. A smaller group (26.8%) rarely or never changed behaviour, indicating mixed effectiveness of communication strategies.

Table 8: What challenges do you face in getting accurate information about hepatitis?

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not In Local Language	80	18.3
Too Much Medical Jargon	100	22.9
Stigma/Fear Of Being Judged	70	16.0
Limited Access To Reliable Media	90	20.6
Lack Of Regular Campaigns	97	22.2
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The most common challenges were medical jargon (22.9%) and lack of regular campaigns (22.2%). Limited access to media and stigma also

posed barriers, while 18.3% noted the absence of local language use.

Table 9: In your opinion, how effective are current communication management practices in creating hepatitis awareness in Jalingo?

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	100	22.9

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Moderately Effective	160	36.6
Less Effective	120	27.5
Not Effective At All	57	13.0
TOTAL	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Most respondents (36.6%) rated current communication management as moderately effective, while 22.9% believed it was very

effective. However, 40.5% felt it was less or not effective at all, highlighting areas for improvement.

Table 10: Which solutions do you think will best improve hepatitis awareness in Jalingo?

Solutions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Community Campaigns In Local Languages	120	27.5
Use Of Trusted Health Workers	100	22.9
Increased Radio/TV Programmes	80	18.3
Active Social Media Use	70	16.0
School And Youth Awareness Programmes	67	15.3
Total	437	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Respondents identified community-based campaigns in local languages (27.5%) and sensitisation by health workers (22.9%) as the most effective solutions. Increased radio/TV programmes, social media, and youth campaigns were also recommended.

information through radio and television, 27.5% through social media, 20.6% from health workers, 11.4% from community campaigns, while only 6.2% relied on friends and family. These results suggest that mass media remains the most dominant communication strategy, closely followed by social media, which is increasingly becoming relevant in health communication. The significant role of health workers also highlights the trust residents place in medical professionals. However, the relatively low figures for community campaigns and interpersonal communication point to underutilisation of grassroots methods that could better engage residents with limited media access. This suggests that while communication strategies exist, they are not evenly managed, and a more integrated approach combining both mass media and community-based channels is needed to improve awareness creation.

1.7 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

i. Objective One: To examine the communication strategies used in creating awareness about hepatitis among residents of Jalingo

This objective aimed to determine the channels through which residents of Jalingo mostly receive information about hepatitis. Data presented in Table 4 addressed this objective. The findings showed that 34.3% of respondents received

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ii. Objective Two: To assess the level of awareness and understanding of hepatitis among Jalingo residents as influenced by communication management practices

This objective focused on how well residents understood the messages and the extent to which such communication improved their knowledge of hepatitis. Data presented in Tables 5 and 6 addressed this objective. Table 5 revealed that 38.9% of respondents found hepatitis messages very clear, 29.7% somewhat clear, 13.7% not clear, while 17.7% reported never receiving any message. Table 6 further showed that 33.2% said communication had improved their knowledge to a very great extent, 36.6% to some extent, 18.3% to a little extent, while 11.9% indicated not at all. Taken together, these findings suggest that while a majority of residents received and understood hepatitis information to some degree, a considerable proportion either lacked clarity or had no exposure at all. This highlights gaps in message design and delivery, showing that communication management practices are not fully effective in ensuring comprehensive and clear understanding across all segments of the population.

iii. Objective Three: To evaluate the effectiveness of communication management in promoting preventive behaviours and reducing misconceptions about hepatitis in Jalingo

This objective sought to assess the extent to which communication efforts translated into preventive behaviours and how challenges affected this process. Data presented in Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 addressed this objective. Table 7 indicated that 41.2% of respondents sometimes adopted preventive behaviours such as vaccination and screening after receiving hepatitis messages, while 32% did so often, and a smaller group (26.8%) rarely or never changed behaviour. Table 8 highlighted challenges to

effective awareness, with respondents pointing to medical jargon (22.9%), lack of regular campaigns (22.2%), limited access to reliable media (20.6%), stigma (16.0%), and absence of local language use (18.3%). Table 9 revealed that 36.6% considered current communication management moderately effective, 22.9% very effective, but 40.5% felt it was either less effective or not effective at all. Finally, Table 10 provided insights into possible solutions, with respondents recommending more community-based campaigns in local languages (27.5%), sensitisation by trusted health workers (22.9%), increased radio/TV programmes (18.3%), active use of social media (16.0%), and school/youth programmes (15.3%). These findings suggest that while communication management has influenced preventive behaviours to some extent, its effectiveness is limited by language barriers, inconsistency, and lack of regular campaigns. The results underscore the need for better-coordinated, audience-focused communication strategies that not only inform but also motivate residents to adopt sustainable preventive practices.

1.8 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have shown that while communication management strategies such as radio, television, social media, and health workers have contributed to raising awareness about hepatitis in Jalingo, significant gaps remain in ensuring clarity, consistency, and reach. Although many residents demonstrated some understanding of hepatitis and reported adopting preventive behaviours, challenges such as the use of medical jargon, lack of local language communication, irregular campaigns, and stigma continue to limit the effectiveness of awareness efforts. Overall, the study concludes that communication management in Jalingo is moderately effective but requires stronger

integration of mass media and community-based strategies, clearer and culturally adapted messaging, and consistent campaigns to achieve broader awareness and sustainable preventive practices against hepatitis.

1.9 Recommendations

- i. Health communication messages on hepatitis should be simplified and delivered in local languages to ensure clarity and accessibility for all residents, including those with low literacy levels.
- ii. Government and health agencies should strengthen community-based campaigns by involving local leaders, schools, and youth groups to increase participation and reduce stigma surrounding hepatitis.
- iii. Media outlets, particularly radio and television, should be engaged to air regular programmes on hepatitis prevention, while social media platforms should be strategically used to reach younger audiences.
- iv. Health workers should be better equipped and supported to act as trusted sources of information, ensuring that accurate and consistent messages are delivered during sensitisation and outreach activities.

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Appendix I: The Questionnaire

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies,

Department of Mass Communication,

Taraba State University, Jalingo

September, 2025.

Dear respondent,

I am a Postgraduate (M.Sc) student of the above-mentioned faculty and department. I am carrying out a research on “*effectiveness of communication management in creating awareness about hepatitis among Jalingo residents, Taraba State*”. This research serves as part of the School of Postgraduate Studies requirement in the course Advance Communication Theories of Mass Communication Department, Taraba State University.

I solicit cooperation in attending to this questionnaire in view of helping me complete my research. Please, kindly note that the information you will provide will be used for no other purpose than for this research.

Thank you for your understanding as I look forward to your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Emmanuella Yough

(Researcher)

08147888135

Instruction:

Please tick (✓) in the box as appropriately representing your response.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender

(a) Male

(b) Female

(c) Prefer not to say

2. Age Range

(a) 18–25 years

(b) 26–35 years

(c) 36–45 years

(d) 46 years and above

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3. **Highest Educational Qualification**

- (a) Primary education
- (b) Secondary education
- (c) Tertiary education (NCE, OND, HND, BSc, etc.)
- (d) Postgraduate education
- (e) Others (please specify) _____

Section B: Research Questions

4. Which communication channels have you mostly received information about hepatitis from?
- (a) Radio/Television
 - (b) Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.)
 - (c) Health workers/clinics
 - (d) Community campaigns (outreach, posters, town announcers)
 - (e) Friends and family
5. How clear and easy to understand are the messages you have received about hepatitis?
- (a) Very clear
 - (b) Somewhat clear
 - (c) Not clear
 - (d) I have never received any information
6. To what extent has communication about hepatitis improved your knowledge of its causes and prevention?
- (a) To a very great extent
 - (b) To some extent
 - (c) To a little extent
 - (d) Not at all
7. Have you ever changed or adopted any preventive behaviour (e.g., vaccination, avoiding unsafe injections, screening) because of hepatitis awareness messages?
- (a) Yes, often
 - (b) Yes, sometimes
 - (c) Rarely
 - (d) Never
8. What challenges do you face in getting accurate information about hepatitis? (Tick as many as may apply)
- (a) Messages are not in local language
 - (b) Too much medical jargon
 - (c) Stigma/fear of being judged
 - (d) Limited access to reliable media
 - (e) Lack of regular awareness campaigns

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9. In your opinion, how effective are current communication management practices in creating hepatitis awareness in Jalingo?
- (a) Very effective
 - (b) Moderately effective
 - (c) Less effective
 - (d) Not effective at all
10. Which solutions do you think will best improve hepatitis awareness in Jalingo? (Tick as many as may apply)
- (a) More community-based campaigns in local languages
 - (b) Use of trusted health workers for sensitisation
 - (c) Increased use of radio/TV programmes
 - (d) Active use of social media platforms
 - (e) Regular school and youth awareness programmes