

**Prevalence/Incidence of Erb's Palsy in Ikwere LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria****Chinonso Vincent Nweke<sup>1\*</sup>, Anelechi Kenneth Madume<sup>2</sup>, John Nwolim Paul<sup>3</sup>, Woroma Wonodi<sup>4</sup> and Chioma Akun-naya Ohanenye<sup>5</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Princely Physiotherapy Clinic, Port Harcourt, Nigeria<sup>2</sup>Department of Physiotherapy, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Nigeria<sup>3</sup>Department of Human Anatomy, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Nigeria<sup>4</sup>Department of Paediatrics, Rivers State University, Teaching Hospital, Nigeria<sup>5</sup>Department of Anatomy, College of Health Sciences, Rhema University, Nigeria**\*Corresponding Author**

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The highest number of women (n=22) 41% fall within the age range of 20-25years, the lowest age bracket being n = (6) 3% with the age range of 35-40years, 35% (n=18) for 14-20years, 15% (n=10) for 25-35years and 6% for the age range of 30-35years respectively. Greater number of mothers having kids with Erb's palsy falls within the age range of 20-25years. 54% (n=31) of the mothers did not attend basic education, 3% (1) attained to the level of MSc/PhD, 20% (15) attained High school, 14% (n=10) has OND and 9% has BSc respectively. 0% is strongly knowledgeable about Erb's palsy, 52% (n=39) where strongly not Aware of the condition, 38% (n=18) where not-Aware while 10% (n=6) where Aware. 32 medical professionals where involved. 45% (n=15) are strongly aware of the condition Erb's palsy, None is strongly not Aware, 45% (n=15) where just Aware, while 10% (n=2) is Not Aware.. From the data, none of the mothers reported the cases within days of presentation. Some believed it would resolve on its own. 10% (n=2) reported within weeks, 23% (15) reported within 3-6months, 28% (n=17) reported within 6months to 1year, while 39% (n=29) reported between 1years – 5years.

**1. Introduction**

It is becoming a menace or dilemma for parents whose kid's presents with Erb's palsy after birth. Erb's palsy is a deformity that happens mostly to babies during birth because of the affectation of the Brachial Plexus [1]. In Rivers state, it seems to be a common trend that every 3 babies out of 100 must present with Erb's palsy. The reason being unknown. In the researchers private practice, The researcher have noticed a surge in the prevalence of Erb's palsy among children in Rivers state, both those diagnosed early and those that came late. The rates of deformity being experienced by those kids are alarming [2]. It puts the parents into tears seeing their babies disfigure after suffering for 9 months. In 3 months, the researcher have handled about 9 cases of Erb's palsy, then add the other ones managed or treated by other colleagues. Some of the damages cause some of the parents to abandon their child and run away or they drop them off at the orphanage owing to the fact that the baby seems deformed (Ikwere council meeting).

Some of them term the child a witch for coming out with

deformity. They believed the baby would bring bad luck to them. Its prevalence is on the high side thereby prompting this research [3].

It has been established so far in Rivers state, Ikwere Local government to be precise that the incidence of Erb's palsy in on the rise due to some lay down information. The knowledge of Erb's palsy is still minimal or none at all in the rural areas. Many of their midwives over there always tell them, it is normal. It is from the Gods. In addition, they should go home and the hand will heal itself. The incident rate in the US is 0.8 -1 per 1000 [4]. It reflects 45% of brachial plexus injury, while some other injuries to the C7 results to 20% of the brachial plexus cases [5]. So many factors have increased the risk of Erb's palsy, and they are; breech delivery, prolonged labour, shoulder dystocia, maternal obesity, size of the baby etc [6]. This Erb's palsy, presents with, drop shoulder, adduction of the arm, internal rotation and wrist drop, muscle weakness.

## 2. Material

- **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was distributed to ascertain the parameters needed. It was designed and approved by the Rivers state teaching Hospital.
- **Weighing Scale:** (Avery Weighs Tronix ZM201 and Salter Max Digital Analyzer Scale).
- **Tape Rule** (Butterfly Type, China)
- **Toronto Test Score**
- **Active Movement Scale**
- **Mallet Scale**
- **Toddler Arm Use Test**

The participants involved mothers who has given birth to 1 – 5 children. Also, those that have basic Education to those with PhD. Medical professionals where involved (Doctors, Nurses/midwife, physiotherapist). Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the aim and objectives of the study clearly explained to all the participants. Their signed informed consent was sought and obtained. The participants was assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided.

### 2.1. Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from Rivers state Teaching Hospital Research and Ethics Committee William-Jumbo, Old GRA, Rivers state.

## 3. Results

From the data analysis of the age of the mothers with Erb's palsy kids, 63 mothers were involved. it shows the age distribution of the women in respect to the number of the kids affected. The highest number of women (22) 41% fall within the age range of 20-25 years, the lowest age bracket being (6) 3% with the age range of 35-40 years, 35% for 14-20 years, 15% for 25-35 years and 6% for the age range of 30-35 years respectively. The figures shows that the greater number of mothers having kids with Erb's palsy falls within the age range of 20-25 years. The data analysis and interpretation shows that 54% of the mothers did not attend basic education, 3% attained to the level of MSc/PhD, 20% attained High school, 14% has OND and 9% has BSc respectively. The data collection shows that 0% is strongly knowledgeable about Erb's palsy, 52% where strongly not Aware of the condition, 38% where not aware while 10% where Aware. In the course of the study, 32 medical professionals where involved to attend to the question. 455 are strongly aware of the condition Erb's palsy; none is strongly not aware, 45% where just Aware, while 10% is Not Aware. This shows the literacy rate of the medical personnel in the rural areas of the research about the condition was 90%.

From the data collected among the 63 mothers involved in the study on the time, their baby stayed before coming to the hospital to seek medical help, is listed below. Although majority sought the help of traditional bonesetters (TBS) [7]. From the data, none of the mothers reported the cases within days of presentation. Some believed it would resolve on its own. 10% reported within weeks, 23% reported within 3-6months, 28% reported within 6months to

1year, while 39% reported between 1years – 5years.

## 4. Conclusion

The result proved the reason for the high incidence of Erb's palsy in Ikwere Local government of Rivers state. This shows that the lack of knowledge about the condition among the mothers that will report the case is so low, resulting to many of them reporting the case in about 5years. In the treatment of Erb's palsy, early intervention helps ameliorate the case and give a very good result. Few percentages complained that they instructed by the medical officer to go home with the baby that the case will resolve on its own without treatment, which later resulted in deformity [8-17].

The researcher recommend that the next research will handle the case of community health outreach and community based rehabilitation to bring the sensitization and treatment to their doorstep.

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**Author Declaration:** I declare that the work is my original work, born out of shared concern on the patients I managed and still treating.

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