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### **Onchocerciasis among Women in a Rural Guinea Savanna, Nigeria: Social Implications for Control.**

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**Abstract: Objectives:** The objective of the current study was investigate the socio-cultural factors affecting the control of onchocerciasis among women in an endemic rural community.

**Methods:** A randomized sampling of households with women above 15 years of age was conducted in a mesoendemic rural community in the Guinea savanna zone of Nigeria. Two hundred and eighty women were selected randomly from the community. Structured questionnaires were administered to the women to solicit information on socio-cultural factors affecting the control of onchocerciasis.

demographic indices. Interviews were conducted as a second exploratory study. **Results:** The investigation helped these women to change their erroneous perceptions of onchocerciasis. They now perceive the disease as a grave social problem that requires attention. Thirty women (14.4%) were infected with onchocercal syndrome, including onchodermatitis, nodules and blindness. There was an increasing prevalence of onchocerciasis with advancing age. I.e women 51 years of age and above were affected 17 (51%). Health care utilization was low; only one person sought medical help. Farming was the main occupational risk. There was a lack of knowledge regarding onchocerciasis, 60% of the women did not know the cause, others cited act of God 7 (23.3%) and a sign of aging 5 (16.6%). They had an impressive knowledge of black flies and their habits. All the women who were affected. Most of the affected women were involved in the polygamous relationship. Health education led all of them to believe they needed treatment. Fear of blindness was the main reason for their desire for seeking treatment.

**Conclusion:** Targeted health education, making use of visual aids is essential for educating illiterate women in endemic areas of onchocerciasis. The social implications of polygamous husbands was observed as a predisposing factor that can enable future successful ivermectin treatment of onchocerciasis.

**Key words:** [Compliance](#), [Ivermectin](#), [Nigeria](#), [Onchocerciasis](#), [W](#)

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