

Title of Article: Vulnerability of Children of Street Trading Nursing Mothers to Diseases in Urban Nigeria Strategies for Mitigation

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Abstract: The study examined the implications of the activities of street trading nursing mothers on the health of their accompanied children. Data was collected through structured face-to-face interviews intermediated by snowballing techniques among 228 mothers who trade on the streets with their children between ages 0 and 12 months. These techniques were adopted due to lack of sampling frame on the target population. Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government Area (LGA) was chosen purposively out of the 20 LGAs in the state due especially to proximity and cost. Data analyses involved univariate and multivariate methods. The results show that over 72% of women interviewed wrapped their babies at their back with their wares upon their heads while trading on the streets. More than two-third are aware of the inherent health risks associated with trading on the street with accompanied babies but claimed they have no means to patronise nannies or crèches. The study revealed that children who are backed/carried by their mothers while trading on the street are 42% more likely to be exposed to sicknesses/diseases than their counterparts who have their children kept away from the road (OR = 1.421, p=0.003). The result obtained has a lot of policy implications considering the ongoing efforts to reduce infant mortality. Government intervention is therefore exigent in curbing street trading activities especially among the nursing mothers. Alternatively, free crèches and children sick-bay could be organized within the central business districts by either the government or other stakeholders to safeguard the children from avoidable exposure to diseases. Finally, campaign on awareness of inherent risks of wrapping babies at back while conducting businesses can be intensified.

Key words: Nursing mother, children, health risk, sickness, street trading