Dental Education

A Health Education Video in an Indigenous Nigerian Language to Dispel Misconceptions Associated with Reversal of Eruption Sequence of Anterior Teeth

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ABSTRACT

Research findings conducted in Nigeria have revealed grave misconceptions regarding eruption of maxillary anterior teeth before the mandibular ones in children as affected individuals are believed to be evil, carriers of misfortune and their families are deemed cursed. Such children are stigmatized, abandoned and may be gotten rid of. A twenty three minute culturally appropriate video in the Yoruba language titled “Baba Yoyin” (meaning male tooth extractor -traditional dentist ) was developed to demystify the Nigerian community about misconceptions associated with reversal of eruption sequence of teeth and educate them about hazards associated with patronizing traditional dentists and the need to visit a dentist/doctor for advice. In the pre-production stage, the video was designed and planned and the cast, crew and appropriate locations for shooting the film shooting were selected. In the production stage, filming was done with several wide, medium and close shots. At post production, the film was edited with a sound mix comprising of sound effects and music. Computer graphic effects were added digitally. This video was produced in Yoruba, an indigenous Nigerian language to serve as a culturally appropriate community dental health education tool targeting nursing mothers, pregnant women, and traditional birth attendants from the lower social class in south western Nigeria. The storyline in this video tape will be translated into Igbo and Hausa, the two other major Nigerian languages. This videotape can be repeated in other African settings whose societies experience similar misconceptions about tooth eruption.

Keywords: Reversal of eruption sequence, child, health education, video

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INTRODUCTION

Many nations of the world especially nations in Africa, have rich cultural heritages with tribes having their own traditional beliefs and myths about various phenomena. Strong myths have often pervaded African societies leading to unpleasant social experiences (Cimpric, 2010). One of such is erupting the upper teeth before the lower ones.

It is the norm that the mandibular central incisors should erupt before the mandibular ones among majority of children (Choi and Yang 2001; Gupta et al, 2007; GunaShekhar and Tenny 2010). However, Aderinokun and Oyeyide 1991, and Denloye et al, 2012 have documented that a reversal of this sequence sometimes occur and is unacceptable in some cultures. For example, among the Indians (Bhatt and Bhargava 2006) and Punjabis (Dosanjh and Ghuman 1996) children who erupt maxillary teeth before mandibular ones are viewed with disdain. African ethnographic reports have revealed that children who cut their upper teeth before the lowers have been killed because of their supposed “developmental anomalies” (Hill and Ball 1996). In southern Ethiopia, among the Omoetic speaking Karo, and Hamar tribes some people still secretly declare such children mingi as they are believed to exert evil influences on others (Mangi, Wikipedia). Among the Baribas in Benin republic, reversal of the eruption sequence in the child determines if a child possesses witchcraft (Sargent, 1989). The Wasawahili and the Zanzibar Arabs (Frazer, 2009), Marakwet of Kenya (Kipkorir and Welbourn 2008) and Kabombo in Zambia (Coe and
There appears to be no prior documentation on a culturally appropriate videotape on reversal of the eruption sequence of anterior teeth in an indigenous language in Nigeria.

**Background**

Research findings in Nigeria revealed grave misconceptions regarding eruption of maxillary anterior teeth before mandibular. To change this misconception, and based this, a twenty-three-minute, six scene video titled *Baba Yoyin* in the Yoruba language was developed. *Baba Yoyin* means male tooth extractor (traditional dentist). The purpose of the video was to demystify misconceptions associated with reversal of eruption sequence of teeth in the Yoruba community and to educate the public that children who erupt their upper teeth before the lower teeth are not evil, nor carriers of misfortune, and their families are not cursed. Furthermore, to inform the public that such children should not be stigmatized, abandoned, despised, hidden or gotten rid of and also the right place to seek consultation in such situations and the hazards associated with patronizing traditional dentists.

Nigerians love entertainment and spend hours watching home videos and movies on digital television. The majority of films purchased are pirated, cheap and easily afforded by community members. In recent years, digital satellite television come with cheaper and more affordable bouquets featuring indigenous films, thereby increasing accessibility to the populace. Therefore, the authors thought it is wise to leverage on this film watching habit by developing a culturally appropriate video in the Yoruba language as a health education tool to change their wrong beliefs regarding reversal of eruption sequence of teeth. The Yoruba language is the local language spoken in south western Nigeria. The video was targeted for adults particularly from the lower social class and health care workers (Traditional birth attendants, community health officers and nurses) working in the suburban and rural areas.

This paper documents the development of the video and the process that went into the finished work.

**The storyline**

In the first scene, a woman called *Mama Bolu* living in the village and nursing a ten-month-old baby (*Bolu*) was told to move out of her matrimonial home by her mother-in-law who claimed that misfortune has befallen the family because Bolu, the baby erupted upper incisors before the lower counterparts. *Mama Bolu*’s mother-in-law strongly believed that Bolu is an evil child who will invoke disaster to the family. Distraught and crying *Mama Bolu* returns to her parent’s home with her child.

The second scene shows *Mama Bolu* mother complaining that her business has plummeted attributing the misfortune to Bolu. *Bolu*’s mother was troubled as her business has plummeted. She faced a lot of discrimination as no one interacted with her, bought wares from her shop in the local market because they believed that her son Bolu will invoke calamity on them. She was very unhappy and distressed.
In the third scene the stigma and isolation became unbearable for Mama Bolu. When Bolus father heard about the unbearable stigmatization, he secretly took Bolu to an old man called Baba Yoyin (the tooth extractor) a traditional dentist who forcefully removed Bolu’s upper teeth. The tooth extraction process developed life threatening complications. Baba Yoyin was arrested, charged to court and was later imprisoned for his atrocities.

The fourth scene shows Bolu who seven years after suffered stigmatization and isolation because community members and peers are scared of him. They discriminated against him and did not interact with him because they believed he possessed supernatural powers and any curse he places on anyone is irrevocable.

The fifth scene shows the traditional head of Mama Bolu’s village called Baale who was visibly unhappy when he heard of the discrimination and isolation experienced by Mama Bolu. The Baale decided to invite a dentist from the town to educate his subjects and the community about tooth eruption.

In the sixth scene the dentist on arrival from the city goes to the Baales palace. The Baale send a town crier to invite members of the community to the palace where the dentist educated them on teeth eruption. The dentist highlighted that erupting upper teeth before the lower counterparts is not evil. Therefore, any child who does so is not an evil child and is not a bearer of misfortune. In addition, the child does not possess supernatural evil powers and is not a witch. The dentist mentioned the effects of this misconception on the child and the hazards of patronizing traditional dentists.

Development of the videotape

An idea about discouraging cultural myths among the local populace regarding reversal of tooth eruption sequence was initiated by one of the authors who built it into a practicable script. With imputes from other authors, an underlying message to address misconceptions of reversal of eruption sequence was identified and a story about a child called Bolu who had erupted his upper anterior teeth before the lowers was developed. A synopsis was prepared and this was followed by a step by step outline which broke the story into several scenes. To guarantee that the message was delivered in a fascinating and enjoyable manner the service of a professional scriptwriter was sought to write the screenplay. The screen play was redrafted and modified several times to reduce ambiguity and improve dramatization, organization, character, discourse and the general style.

In the pre-production stage, the video was designed and planned. The authors employed an experienced indigenous film producer and the cast and crew were selected. Casts were selected for age, appearance and personality. Appropriate locations for shooting the film shooting were identified and selected by the film producer. The selected location was at Amuloko a sub urban district in Ibadan. Six different house holds, a large compound with a building to simulate the Baales palace and two dusty pathways were selected. The houses were all old, built with mud, thereby simulating a village setting and with local goats and chickens wandering about. Permission to undertake the filming was obtained from members of the local communities and a few people volunteered their house and compound at no cost for filming.

In the production stage, preparations were made to shoot the film. The actors rehearsed their scripts by practicing their lines several times over. The picture crew rehearsed many times with the actors by performing every detail of the scenes and making necessary adjustments to enable them get the best shots. The make-up artist made the characters to look like local people in the village by applying make up to simulate the Yoruba traditional facial scarification marks on some of the actors. Filming was done with several wide, medium and close shots. Filming lasted a week.

At the post production stage, the film was edited by a film editor and a sound mix comprising sound effects, background sounds and music as well as computer graphic effects were added digitally using video editing software.

The video was previewed by a team of eight people comprising a paediatric dentist, community health dentist, two community health nurses, and four lay community members from low socio economic group who will be the target audience. They evaluated the clarity and comprehension, appropriateness of the language and cultural sensitivity of the information. They also checked if the videos showed the content.

The following feedbacks were received: The information was not completely understood as they felt the story line was not very clear in one of the scenes. However, they stated that it was culturally sensitive, video pictures illustrated the content, and language level was good and appropriate. The feedback resulted in modifications of relevant parts of the script for improved clarity allowing a better flow from one scene to the other. This feedback resulted in further film shooting to affect the corrections. The development of this video was approved by the Oyo State Research Ethical Review Committee in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Conclusion

This film will be sent to suburban and rural areas with a view to assessing its effectiveness among community health nurses, Traditional Birth Attendants and community members from the lower social class. It is the intention of the authors that this storyline will be videotaped into the Igbo and Hausa languages, the two other major languages in Nigeria. In addition, this videotape can be repeated in other African settings whose society experience similar misconceptions about tooth eruption.

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