

**Media Public Enlightenment Programmes on Cervical Cancer and Utilization of Screening Services among Women of Vulnerable-Age Group in Ebonyi State, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study investigated media public enlightenment programmes on cervical cancer and utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State. Three research questions guided the study which are in line with the research questions. Media no doubt is one of the most suitable medium that can be engaged for the purpose of educating them, thereby ultimately eradicating the menace. This study attempted to find out if women with low level education in semi-urban areas are aware of the disease. Engaging the diffusion of innovation theory and the health belief model for intellectual strength, combined with the multi-stage sampling method under the survey method approach, 300 copies of the questionnaire were administered with 285 returned for analysis. Findings reveal that media public create awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to a high extent, that cervical cancer messages aired through media publicity have a positive impact to vulnerable*

*women of Ebonyi State to an extent and that the extent of utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State are to a low extent. The study recommends that governments should always encourage and assist in financing broadcasting organization for effective media enlightenment programmes in the state and government should equipped the needed facilities for cervical cancer screening services for the vulnerable age women.*

**KEYWORDS:** media, enlightenment, cervical cancer, utilization, vulnerable

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Cancer spread through the human body, causing serious pains and eventually leading to death. According to the American cancer society (2015), Cancer cells can also invade (grow into) other tissues, something that normal cells can't do. Growing out of control and invading other tissues are what makes a cell a cancer cell. Cancer cells often travel to other parts of the body, growing and forming new tumours that replace normal body tissues. American Cancer Society (2015), posits that cancer earns its name depending on where the growth started. No matter where a cancer may spread, it is always named (and treated) based on the place it started. Meaning that, breast cancer that has spread to the liver or the bone is still breast cancer, not liver or bone cancer. Cancer grows at different rates and therefore responds to different treatments, a reason why people with cancer need treatment that is aimed at their particular kind of cancer.

Over the years, despite the scientific discoveries and capabilities, which have led to extended life span of patients, as espoused by Goss, Picard, and Tarab (2012), the number of cancerous ailments has also been on the increase. According to Reuben, Milliken and Paradis (2012). The past four decades of investment in cancer research have yielded important gains in understanding the complex nature of cancer. These discoveries have in turn led to cancer detection methods and treatment strategies that have enhanced cancer patient survival, most notably among children. Yet cancer remains a fearsome specter for all Americans, and for too many, a harsh and harrowing reality. With an aging population at increasing risk for cancer and the incidence of some cancers rising for unknown reasons, bold steps are required to address the urgent need for more effective and affordable cancer prevention and treatment interventions.

The death toll of cancer related ailments also increase by the day. One of such is the cervical cancer, a deadly disease with high death toll associated with it. According to Udoudo (2017), Cervical Cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in the female population especially women under the age of 35 years and simultaneously the leading cause of death among women worldwide. Cervical cancer affects about 16 per 100,000 women per year and kills about 9 per 100,000 women per year. An estimated 555,100 new cases of cervical cancer was expected in 2007. More than 80% of these cases were to be found in developing countries like Nigeria.

The National Population Census conducted in Nigeria in 2006, reported the population of women to be over 60 million from ages 15 and above. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Cervical cancer kills about 270 000 women every year. It has been called “a case study in health equity” because most (85%) of these deaths occur in the developing world. In large part, this inequity is due to the lack of cervical cancer screening programmes in those countries – the same programmes that are taken for granted in Australia, Europe and the United States of America. And since cervical cancer affects relatively young women (mortality rates climb as women enter their forties), it results in many lost years of life – 2.7 million age-weighted years of life were lost to the disease in the year 2000.

Nwozor and Oragudosi (2013), reported that cervical cancer was the leading cause of gynecological cancers in Northern Nigeria, accounting for 65.7% of all gynecological cancers in Nigeria. He further added that in 2025, there will be 22,914 new cervical cancer cases and 15,251 cervical cancer deaths in Nigeria. Abiodun and Fatungase (2013) reported that the National Age standardized incidence rate for cervical cancer in Nigeria is estimated to be 33.0 cases per 100,000 women per year. In Ebonyi State for example, eight (8) cases of cervical cancer were recently recorded Alexekwueme Teaching Hospital [FETHA] (Ugwu 2019). Abiodun and Fatungase (2013) argues that the grim picture contrasts sharply with what is obtained in developed countries where the incidence and mortality are about half of the rest of world. The huge disparities in morbidity and mortality between developed and developing countries exist largely because over the last few decades, developed countries have implemented effective programmes for the prevention of cervical cancer, in some countries reducing the incidence and mortality by up to 80%.

Vizcaino (2000) affirm the position that, there is limited access to screening services in developing countries and this has increased the number of women affected by this disease. UNESCO (2009) noted that, in developing countries the greater part of the people are the rural dwellers and are frequently isolated due to illiteracy and lack of transport. Unfortunately, the story remains largely the same till date. Effective communications is about the only means of turning the story round and engage with rural people if they are to participate in developmental programmes.

In all ramification media public enlightenment, has become one of the strongest mediums; this is so because it influence everyone as individual in the society. It has been accepted that broadcasting is a powerful and an effective instrument for achieving goals, which includes education, information, mobilization, and shaping mature public opinion. This influence is so great that, hardly will person see an individual in this world who has never been touched by programme dissemination and development of information otherwise known as public Enlightenment programme to the general public which necessitate orderly and people oriented programming which the issues of cervical cancer and aspect utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age are not excluded.

Media to Onabanjo (1999) is one of the several means of getting messages to a large number of people at the same time, because it transcends the boundary of space and time, and also leaps across illiteracy barriers that characterise the areas where rural

settlers live. It is a powerful instrument in the area of public enlightenment on health issues. Media continues to be one of the most popular medium used to transmit information and engage large numbers of people from many parts of the society. In recognition of this, governments, elements of civil society, and the United Nations system have used radio as a powerful tool to achieve a broad range of goals. This has been particularly evident in recent years in situations of national crisis.

Adam and Harford (2010) clearly establish that media is not a medium that the government and health educators can afford to ignore, or regard as marginal. It is to be used as a vital resource which can bring about attitude change. Media can be a powerful advocate in the spectrum of development. This study explored media public enlightenment programmes on cervical cancer and utilization of screening among women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State

### **Statement of the Problem**

The increasing cases of cervical cancer in Ebonyi State remained a great problem associated with human health. The prevalence of cervical cancer in Ebonyi is one that should be treated with caution and utmost priority. In a recent Ugwu (2019) asserted that, a staggering 48 million women are at risk of contracting cervical cancer, while over 9,659 women die annually and an average of 26 die on a daily basis in Nigeria. It is safe therefore to assume that cervical cancer is the second most diagnosed cancer in women, which makes it priority to create awareness about it among the women communities especially those at the grass root levels. For this reasons, the study sought to test the utilization of screening service and media public enlightenment programs in Ebonyi State on cervical cancer. It among other things explored if media public enlightenment programmes on cervical cancer and utilization of screening among women of vulnerable age in Ebonyi State

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to investigate media public enlightenment programmes on cervical cancer and utilization of screening among women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which media public enlightenment create an awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to women valuable age group
2. Find out whether cervical cancer messages aired through media publicity have an impact on vulnerable women of Ebonyi State
3. Ascertain the extent to which utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State as a result of exposure to media messages

### **Research Questions.**

1. To what extent do media public enlightenment create an awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to women valuable age group?
2. How does cervical cancer messages aired through media publicity have an impact on vulnerable women of Ebonyi State ?
3. What are the extent of utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State as a result of exposure to media message?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cervical Cancer: A General Overview**

Cervical cancer is highly curable because it grows slowly and is detectable through pap smears. Very few symptoms accompany the development of cervical cancer,

which is why it is so important to have regular screening examination (pap smear and pelvis examination). According to Sterling and Tying (2001), cancer causes more health problems and the incidence appears to vary geographically. Approximately 500,000 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year and of these, about 80% are in developing countries where facilities for screening, early diagnosis and possibilities for treatment may be considerably less than in the developed nations. Sterling and Tying (2001) further affirms that Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) commonly known as genital warts has been found in the majority of invasive cervical cancers. According to them, studies of women in countries in South America, Europe, North Africa and South East Asia showed that an average of 91% of cancers were HPV positive. Their study revealed that there was a slight variation of positivity rates from 75% in Columbia to 98% in Paraguay. Some feel that as many as 100% of cervical cancers harbour HPV genomes, and that sensitive methods of detections will reveal almost no HPV negative lesions. The majority (60-70%) of HPV positive cervical cancer harbour HPV type 16, whilst HPV 18 is the second and highest common type in this disease (10 -20%). From longer term studies, it appears that the presence of high risk HPVs in cervical cancer gives. Rettner (2012) states that Human Papilloma Virus can be transmitted sexually through skin to genital contact without necessarily engaging in intercourse. Therefore, women who have never had sex can still acquire HPV which would put them at risk for developing cervical cancer. There is no doubt that cervical cancer is real and may have infected many women in Nigeria. The major task is how many women are aware, or are doing anything about screening to check their status and taking action to avert the terrible consequences that attend the scourge of cervical cancer.

## **2.2 Media Enlightenment and Public Causes of Cancer**

Media refers to a diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication (Udoka, 2013). The technologies through which this communication takes place include a variety of outlets. Broadcast media transmit information electronically *via* media such as films, radio, recorded music, or television. Media content that builds confidence and counteracts misperceptions may have a potential in both conflict prevention and transformation. Mass media often plays a key role in today's conflict (Melon, 2012). Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms; either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence. The media can be an effective tool to build relationships. It can support greater understanding and cohesion between people who consider themselves different from one another. To take necessary action against any scourge, the infected individual must be aware of his/her medical condition. To be aware is much more than the traditional oral historical teachings, it requires a wide spread and heavy bombardment of information dispensed from the source to the receiver. Radio no doubt is a veritable medium that can largely drive messages home to its audience and will engender required reaction from the audience in spite of who they (audiences) are. Oyekanmi (2006) as cited by Alliu (2012) asserts that radio is an electronic device that uses electromagnetic waves for the transmission of messages, information, communication and it possesses some attributes which places it upon the television broadcasting.

Broadcast experts largely are of the opinion that radio is one medium that is most appropriate for rural and urban emancipation programmes. Its capacity to beat distance and have immediate effect is a major strength. Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013) corroborate this position stating that radio communication educates citizens on new issues inherent in the society. Issues such as politics, business, and current affairs and so on, are aired to create awareness. Radio therefore serves as an agent of social mobilisation as people are moved to delivering certain goals, based on their awareness of their rights. Osunkunle (1998) in his discussion of relevance and place of radio in the realm of development of rural communities argues that radio should also be acceptable to the people in a community and the station should cater for everybody in that community. It should be sensitive to the needs of the community, and respect the languages, traditions, beliefs and cultures of that community and be accountable by being answerable to the community it serves.

Furthermore he added, Media is easily accessible and affordable, easily understood and accepted. It does not demand any complexity in broadcasting or listening. It can be used or listened to anytime and anywhere. According to Kuewumi (2009), radio is cheap, simple, and trusted. It does not discriminate between the learned and uneducated. With simple operating controls, people can listen to radio even if they can neither read nor write. Onabajo (2000) affirms that radio is widespread than television and written press, both of which are located in the urban areas. The rare attempt at setting up private, or commercial radio stations, has not succeeded in penetrating a radio market, traditionally dominated by the public sector. More than half its population is illiterate and this makes the educational function of the media, vital. Not only can it contribute to the emergence of a democratic culture, but it can also help prevent the decline, in the standard of living and combat poverty with its various accessories, such as malnutrition, disease and illiteracy.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study revolves around on the diffusion of innovation theory. According to Glanz (2002) Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory was developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, it is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated in communication to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behaviour, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (purchase or use a new product, acquire and perform a new behaviour). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the behaviour or product and in the case of this study the idea as new or innovative.

Adoption of a new idea, behaviour, or product does not happen simultaneously in a social system; rather it is a process whereby some people are more apt to adopt the innovation than others. Researchers have found that people who adopt an innovation early have different characteristics than people who adopt such innovation later. When promoting an innovation to a target population, it is important to understand the characteristics of the target population that will help or hinder adoption of the innovation. There are five established adopter categories, and while the majority of the general population tends to fall in the middle categories, it is still necessary to

understand the characteristics of the target population. According to Glanz (2002), there are different strategies that can be used to appeal to the different adopter categories. There are: Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards.

**Innovators** - These are people who want to be the first to try the innovation. They are venturesome and interested in new ideas. These people are willing to take risks, and are often the first to develop new ideas. Very little, if anything, needs to be done to appeal to this population. **Early Adopters** - These are people who represent opinion leaders. They enjoy leadership roles, and embrace change opportunities. They are already aware of the need to change and so are very comfortable adopting new ideas. Strategies to appeal to this population include how-to-use manuals and information sheets on implementation. They do not need information to convince them to change. **Early Majority** - These people are rarely leaders, but they do adopt new ideas before the average person. That said, they typically need to see evidence that the innovation works before they are willing to adopt it. Strategies to appeal to this population include success stories and evidence of the innovation's effectiveness. **Late Majority** - These people are sceptical of change, and will only adopt an innovation after it has been tried by the majority. Strategies to appeal to this population include information on how many other people have tried the innovation and have adopted it successfully. **Laggards** - These people are bound by tradition and very conservative. They are very sceptical to change and are the hardest group to bring on board. Strategies to appeal to this population include statistics, fear appeals, and pressure from people in the other adopter groups. The stages, by which a person adopts an innovation, and whereby diffusion is accomplished, include awareness of the need for an innovation, decision to adopt (or reject) the innovation, initial use of the innovation to test it, and continued use of the innovation. Considering the high level of under development in Nigeria especially in the rural areas which constitute a large chunk of the population, added to the low level of hospicare and facilities, cervical cancer may be perceived as a new idea or innovation. There would definitely be the need to adopt ideas or behaviours associated with the prevention of cervical cancer, which is only possible if the awareness and consciousness about cervical cancer is established. This study therefore tried to establish whether or not women of Ebonyi are aware of cervical cancer and whether they understand its severity enough to get as many as possible on board to stand against the disease.

### **Empirical Review**

Onabajo, (2010), conducted research on Knowledge, attitude and practice of cervical cancer screening among women infected with HIV in Africa: Systematic review and meta-analysis. Over the years awareness and uptake of cervical cancer screening services has remained poor in developing countries. Problems associated with cervical cancer incidence include late reporting, ignorance and cultural issues relating to cervical cancer screening. This study sought to explore the awareness, perception and utilization of cervical cancer screening among women in Ibadan as well as factors that influence utilization.

Isuro, (2018) carried research on the male role in cervical cancer prevention and transmission: Representation of subject positions in South African press reports.

Cervical cancer (CC) media coverage neglects mention and interrogation of the role of men in sexually transmitting the virus linked to CC. Newspapers, in their public role of engaging with social debates, unlike other media forms, might be expected to interrogate misconceptions of CC. This study sought to analyse how male persons are represented in newspaper reports of CC. Using the discursive analytic tool of subject positioning, South African newspaper reports of CC were analysed. The findings revealed five categories of subject positions with male persons serving as protagonists who interact with subjects in the remaining four categories.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted because of the information required for the study. According to Maduabum (1999) survey design is a design in which data are collected from a relatively large number of people or items considered to be representative of the whole population or group.

### **Area of the Study**

The area of study was Ebonyi State which is located at the South-East geo- political zone of Nigeria. Ebonyi State was created in 1st October, 1996 out of Abia and Enugu States, with her capital located in Abakaliki. The State is known as the ‘Salt of the Nation’, named after its extensive, huge salt deposits located at the Okposi and Uburu Salt Lakes (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2015). The State shares territorial boundaries in the north with Benue State, in the west with Enugu State, in the east with Cross River State and south with Abia State. Ebonyi State lies approximately within longitude 7<sup>o</sup>30’ and 8<sup>o</sup> 30’E, with latitude 5<sup>o</sup> 40’ and 6<sup>o</sup> 45’N (ZODML, 2013). Ebonyi state operates with many hospitals.

### **Population of the Study**

The targeted population of the study comprised 151,048 women of vulnerable age group in Ebonyi State (Source: Ministry of Health, Ebonyi State)

### **Determine Sampling Size**

The research adopted the Taro Yamene’s formular because the formula mostly used when the population of study is known. Since the population size of the workers selected is known to 151,048 therefore, this qualifies to adopt Taro Yamene’s formula for sample size determination

Formular:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

When n = sample size

N = Population study

1 = Sample error (0.05)

$$= \frac{151,048}{(1+151,048) \times 0.025}$$

$$n = \frac{151,048}{151,048 \times 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{151,048}{377.3}$$

$$n = 400.33$$

$$n = 400$$

Therefore, the sample size of this study is 400 respondents

**Sampling Technique**

Purpose sampling technique was adopted for the study based on the three constituency. A sample according to Nwodu (2006) is part of the entire population that is selected for investigation. The sampling is one of the fundamental strategies in survey research.

**Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection was researcher self develop structured questionnaire and interview.

**Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was validated by two experts. The experts were requested to examined the content of the instruments in line with the purpose of the study, in terms of their content relevance, items clarity, design, as well as ascertain if the items were related to the objectives of the study, research questions. The experts also validated the two research instruments in terms the sentence construction, double-barrel items, clarity of words and arrangement of the instrument. The experts offered useful suggestions which led to the modification of the questionnaires before the final copies.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

The validated instrument was trial tested with twenty (20) women of vulnerable age in a sister state which is not part of the study area, to ensure its reliability. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha technique was used for its analysis. Reliability coefficients obtained was 0.87. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable and therefore considered appropriate for use.

**Administration of the Instrument**

The printed copies of the questionnaires were administered to the respondents through a personal, direct hand-delivery process and on a face- to-face contact with the researcher and research assistants. The research assistants also received briefings and instructions on how to administered the questionnaire to the respondents.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The research questions were answered using frequency table and percentage. No application of chi square statistical tools due to unavailable of test of hypothesis in the study.

**Data Presentation and Analysis****Research Question 1**

To what extent do media public enlightenment create an awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to women of vulnerable age group?

**Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents on media public enlightenment create an awareness on the threat of cervical cancer**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	269	94.4
No	16	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Based on the respondents responses, the study revealed that to high extent do media public enlightenment create an awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to life. This was based on frequency ratings of respondents opinion that score high. While that said no are to a low extent.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents' media source on cervical cancer**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Through Radio	45	15.8
Through Television	20	7.0
Through Newspapers	50	17.5
Through Friends	104	36.5
Through Health Workers	50	17.5
No response	16	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Analyzing research question one, on whether or not women of Ebonyi State aware of the cervical cancer disease and their level of awareness on the threat it poses to life; respondents' answers as shown in tables 4.1- 4.6 revealed, majority of the respondents know about cervical cancer (table 4.1) as 94.4% claimed to have knowledge of the disease.

### Research Question 2

How does cervical cancer messages aired through media publicity have an impact on vulnerable women of Ebonyi State ?

**Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents on media publicity**

Yes	271	95.1
No	14	4.9
Total	285	100.0

Research question two was designed to find out if women of Ebonyi are aware of cervical cancer messages aired on radio; respondents' answers as reported in tables 4.5 - 4.8 revealed that women of Ebonyi are not ardent listeners of radio. About 84.2% either listens to radio once in a while on the average of twice a week.

### Research Question 3

What are the extent of utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age in Ebonyi State as a result of exposure to media message?

**Table 4.6: Distribution of respondents on regularity of Utilization**

	Frequency	Percent
Once in a while	156	54.7
Twice in a week	84	29.5
Everyday	31	10.9
No response	14	4.9
Total	285	100.0

In the Table above, the responded agreed that shows that: the aspect of utilization recorded 54.7 % on only once in a while twice in a week recorded 29.5& showing that aspect of utilization is low. This research question was designed to test respondents' opinion of the cervical cancer messages they had on frequency.

### Discussion of the Findings

Based on data collected in research question one on the Media public enlightenment create awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to women of vulnerable age group. Based on the respondents responses, the study revealed that to high extent do media public enlightenment create an awareness on the threat of cervical cancer to women of vulnerable age group. This was based on frequency ratings of respondents opinion that score high. The findings agreed with the assertion of Onabanjo (1999) which says that radio broadcasting is one of the several means of getting messages to a large number of people at the same time, because it transcends the boundary of space and time, and also leaps across illiteracy barriers. It is a powerful instrument in the area of public enlightenment on health issues. If the cervical cancer scourge is to be adequately stemmed and eradicated, there is definitely need to use radio in the midst of communities like Ebonyi where radio is about the most effective and reliable means of reaching the populace if they must be propelled to take action against the disease. There is no doubt that radio messages can be used to depict cultural heritage and make use of oral/musical heritage to broadcast messages on cervical cancer.

The extent of utilization of screening services among women of vulnerable age in Ebonyi State as a result of exposure to media message. The highest number of respondents had heard about the disease through friends but the extent of utilization are basically low as recorded by the respondents. In agreement to the findings, Sterling and Tying's (2001) asserted that the extent of utilization of screening services centres are not well equip with the needed instrument for effective utilization. This revealed that, based on the responses of the respondents that some women of vulnerable age group do not see reasons of utilizing the screening services.

### **Conclusion**

The result of this study revealed that majority of the women in Ebonyi State have heard about cervical cancer but close to half of them are not really aware in the sense that they have heard about it but are unable to identify the symptoms. However women are of the opinion that cervical cancer messages on radio are very educative and if made in the indigenous language of the people, could create richer awareness. The study revealed that aspect of utilization of screening services are to low extent. However there is a lot of work yet to be done to drive the message on awareness and prevention of the disease. They opine that messages on cervical cancer over the radio are very important and hope that it would be aired regularly in the nearest future. There is no doubt that, while radio is a good source of information and rallying the citizenry together to pursue a course or developmental ideals and goals, it is still not adequately used or taken advantage of in Nigeria to push ideas and growth sustenance among the people.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings it were recommended that:

1. Government should always encourage and assist in financing broadcasting organization for effective media enlightenment programmes in the state.
2. Government should equip the needed facilities for cervical cancer screening services for the vulnerable age women.
3. Media promoters should not just present miserly pieces of information about the disease but well detailed ones. To enable the ideas diffuse properly into the social system, women of Ebonyi should be well informed and taught concerning the disease

to the extent that the knowledge of it is diffused among the citizenry and then it will trigger action to fight against diseases.

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