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THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN ARMY IN HEALTHCARE DELIVERY THROUGH MEDICAL OUTREACH

Abstract:

The article identified various medical or clinical outreach conducted by the Nigerian military, particularly the Nigerian Army. Medical outreach under the Medical Corp of the Nigerian had carried out clinical services to the civilians as one of the responsibilities of the Directorate of the Civil-military Affairs of the Nigerian Army to strengthen the relationship between the military and civilians. The researchers adopted an explanatory research design and secondary data were elicited from some medical outreach carried out by the Nigerian Army in different parts of Nigeria. The findings showed that the Nigerian Army used to embark on free medical outreach in communities that host military formations as part of their contribution to improving the well-being of the civilian population. Medical Corps which comprises the Women Corps of the Nigerian Army is using medical outreach to assist the civilians within their area of responsibility who cannot afford or have no access to healthcare service to access it free of charge at their doorsteps. The study concluded that free medical services had yielded positive results that changed the perception of many Nigerians of the Nigerian military which is known to be hostile, brutal and indifferent to civilians. This is evident in the responses of the beneficiaries of the free healthcare services where the community leaders promised to collaborate with the military in helping them to secure the country in the face of security challenges.

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Introduction

Enhancing a good relationship between the military and their host communities is an aspect of civil-military relations. Military: Army, Air Force, and Navy in Nigeria and other parts of the world often assist residents where military formations are located either in times of emergency or in normalcy. Owens conceives civil-military relations as a relationship between a State's armed forces as an institution, the government, and other sectors of society where the armed forces are engaged³. In the years following World War II, Huntington, Janowitz, and Finer shifted the focus of civil-military relations away from individuals and toward the connections between military institutions, society, and governments⁴. The military does not assist civilians only in an emergency or crisis, they render services to the civilian population in peacetime such as free medical services, provision of potable water and construction of access roads. There are some activities within the realm of civil-military relations which are not provided during an emergency such as medical outreach, where the military provides medical assistance to the civilian population within their spheres of operation. World Health Organization recognizes the role of the military in the provision of healthcare services to the civilian population. In different parts of the world, the military is involved in health services' participation in a time of natural disasters, chemical, nuclear, or radioactive incidents, and disease outbreaks, including collaboration with public health emergency operations centres and emergency medical teams⁵. Therefore, the military under civil-military relations engages in different activities to cement their relationship with the civilian population. This is because civil-military relations encompass the entire range of interactions between the military and civilian society at every level⁶. The interaction is not

³ M. T. Owens, *What Military Officers Need To Know About Civil-Military Relations*, Philadelphia 2013, p. 1.

⁴ S. P. Huntington, *National Policy and the Transoceanic*, "National Policy And The Transoceanic Navy. *Proceedings*", 1954, Vol. 80/5/615, pp. 480-90; M. Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Glencoe 1960; S. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, Boulder 1962.

⁵ *National civil-military health collaboration framework for strengthening health emergency preparedness: WHO guidance document*, Geneva 2021, p. 6.

⁶ T. C. Bruneau, A. Croissant, *Civil-Military Relations: Control and Effectiveness Across Regimes*, Boulder 2019, p. 2.

restricted to any activity, the interaction is determined by the circumstance and the need that may arise.

Well-equipped militaries use their logistical, communication, organizational, epidemiological, and mobile laboratory resources to establish monitoring for epidemic-prone populations in humanitarian catastrophes. For example, in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004, a U.S. Department of Defence overseas laboratory, United States Naval Medical Research Unit-2 (NAMRU-2, in Jakarta), collaborated with the Indonesian government and WHO to establish a field laboratory in the heavily affected Indonesian city of Banda Aceh. The laboratory supplied reference services that confirmed some epidemics, allowing for prompt intervention in some outbreaks and assuaging fears about other infectious diseases. After a few months, NAMRU-2 handed over the lab to the Indonesian government, which continued to operate it⁷.

Therefore, the objective of this study in Nigeria is to examine the involvement of the military in providing healthcare services in non-emergency situations under the control of the Chief, Civil-Military Relations of the Nigerian military. This is because conventionally based on the literature examined in this paper, the military is used to provide healthcare services in emergencies that are, responding to natural disasters or outbreaks of disease. However, this paper focuses on instances where the military in Nigeria organizes medical outreach to render medical service free of charge to the civilian population in non-emergency situations in Nigeria. The Nigerian Army established a Department of Civil-Military Affairs in December 2010 charged with the following cardinal objectives or responsibilities. The DCMA was established principally to act as a conduit between the Nigerian Army and the general populace. As a Strategic national institution, it is accountable for highlighting the principles of Civil Military Affairs. In addition, the Department is tasked with introducing and disseminating the fundamentals of civil-military relations in the fields of human rights, the rule of law, liaison during negotiations, and conflict resolution. It is within this mandate that the Nigerian Army carry out free medical outreach to the civilian population as a strategy to build good relations with them. The objectives set by the Nigerian Army for the Department of Civil-Military Relations deviate from the theoretical and conceptual definitions of civil-military relations by scholars in the field stated earlier in the introductory part of this paper. In the same vein, the World Health Organization (WHO) at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, have developed a National civil-military health collaboration framework for

⁷ J. Chretien, et al., *The Importance of Militaries from Developing Countries in Global Infectious Disease Surveillance*, "Bulletin of the World Health Organization" 2007, vol. 85, pp. 174-180.

strengthening health emergency preparedness. The framework aims to provide the public health sector and military actors and services at the national level with guidance for establishing, advancing and maintaining collaboration and coordination, with the focus on the country's core capacities required to effectively prevent, detect, respond to, recover from and build back better after health emergencies⁸. This explores the significance of clinical services delivered by the military even though the free medical outreach that the Nigerian Army organizes every year is not during an emergency but it is also a response to healthcare challenges faced by communities.

Since the return of democracy to Nigeria in 1999, the medical Corp of the Nigerian military in their different formations used to carry out a medical outreach by providing medical services to the civilians living in their host community. Medical or clinical outreach is conceived as the coordination and delivery of clinical services in an outreach context known as clinical outreach. Its goal is to deliver primary health care to populations that might otherwise find it difficult to seek and get care at fixed health centre locations. Clinical outreach, in its simplest form, is a strategy for meeting people and communities where they are and providing care in settings that best suit their needs and circumstances⁹.

As part of the measures or strategies by the military in developed and developing countries to assist their host communities, the military medical personnel from time to time, go outside their barracks and render free health services which strengthens the relationship between the military and their civilian neighbours. These kinds of health services are provided by the trained military medical corps outside the military health facilities in the barracks or military formations. The rationale behind the clinical outreach is to take healthcare services to the reach of people who lacked access to healthcare services due to financial, cultural reasons, or distance. During the outreach, the medics provide makeshift facilities to meet with the patients either in tents or vehicles.

Sketch of Related Literature Reviewed

A study conducted in China, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines showed how the military assisted in an emergency by providing relief medical services to the civilian population. The study focused on the assistance rendered by the military during the COVID-19 pandemic. The work provided a comparative analysis of the role of the medical corps in the three countries during the coronavirus pandemic as part of the domestic civil-military

⁸ *National civil-military health collaboration...*

⁹ Health Outreach Partners, *Clinical Outreach*, "Outreach Reference Manual" 2015, p.4.

engagement (CME). However, the paper has not analyzed the healthcare services that the military provides to civilians in non-emergency situations or pandemics¹⁰. The main thrust of this paper is to examine the healthcare services that military personnel render to civilians in a time of peace often referred to as clinical outreach.

Research carried out in Nigeria on community perceptions of military involvement in epidemic response in the Northeast region of Nigeria on the activities of the Department of Civilian-Military Relations of the Nigerian Army showed that the three components of the military: Army, Air Force, and Navy were involved in providing humanitarian assistance to the civilians affected by the Boko Haram insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria. Military involvement has become a cornerstone of modern epidemic response. However, some of the residents of the Northeast viewed military participation in the provision of social services as an important strategy for cementing a good relationship between the military and civilians in the areas affected by the Boko Haram insurgency¹¹. Furthermore, the study concluded that epidemic response is now a part of military involvement in disasters. The basic concept is that in instances when humanitarian actors are unable to respond quickly and effectively such as the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's north-eastern region, the military is obligated to intervene due to its ability to rapidly deploy its personnel.

Methodology

This study has adopted an explanatory research design that is suitable for research of this nature and requires an in-depth explanation of the phenomenon at hand. The goal of this study is to explain the involvement of the Nigerian military in clinical outreach under the Directorate of Civil-Military Relations of the Nigerian Army which is part of the strategy for enhancing civil-military relationships. Secondary data were elicited from sample clinical outreach that the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force carried out from 2010 to 2021 from documented materials. The period is selected because the period is characterized by the involvement of the military in internal security management as a result of violent conflicts in different parts of Nigeria. The sample is drawn from military medical exercises from all the six geopolitical

¹⁰ B. T. Samuel, G. Rob, K. Josiah, *Civil-Military Engagement during Public Health Emergencies: A Comparative Analysis of Domestic Responses to COVID-19*, "Research Square" 2021, pp. 1-16.

¹¹ C. Kwaja, D. J. Olivieri, *Community Perceptions of Military Involvement in Epidemic Response in the Northeast Region of Nigeria: Implications for Civilian-Military Relations*, "Report of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University" 2020, pp.1-37.

zones in Nigeria: South-South, Southwest, Southeast, North Central, Northeast and Northwest where at least one State is selected using a purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique allows the researcher to pick a sample that fits the criteria for inclusion and the purpose of the research. Therefore, the States where the military carried out clinical or medical outreach covered the six geopolitical zones. The data are presented below thematically from the sample drawn from the activities of the Nigerian military.

Data Presentation & Analysis

Thirteen of 36 States and Abuja the capital of Nigeria were sampled for this study. The table below various military interventions in the areas of healthcare services in Nigeria in an attempt to boost their relationship with the civilians.

Table 1. Chronicle of Military Interventions in the Provision of Healthcare Service in Nigeria

/N	Year	Category	State	Activity	Response by the Beneficiary
1.	2021	Army	Benue	Free medical services to some communities in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. It also included the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Makurdi,	The Chairman of Makurdi Local Government Area, Anthony Dygeh, commended the Nigerian Army for the exercise and urged the people to take part in the medical outreach.
2.	2021	Army	Abuja	Medical outreach at Mpape community, Bwari Area Council in Abuja	The Nigerian Army has shown by this medical outreach that it is truly our Army. They are not all about fighting wars. They have demonstrated that they care about our health also.
3.	2021	Army	Sokoto	Nigerian Army Offers Free Medical Service to 3,000 Persons in Sokoto	The district head of Sifawa, thanked the Nigerian army for the kind gesture,

				Communities	appealing to them to extend the same to other communities in the state.
4.	2021	Army	Plateau	Army Holds Medical outreach for Jos communities	It is a good development. The service is to the advantage of the less privileged ones because we cannot afford medical bills.
5.	2021	Army	Kaduna	Nigerian Army offers free medical services to 5,000 residents of Kaduna State	A beneficiary, who suffers eye problems thanked the Division for the intervention but was quick to call on the military leadership to increase the security capability in the area as he and other subsistence farmers have not been able to go to the farm due to the nefarious activities of the criminal bandits.
6.	2019	Army	Kaduna	The army offers free medical services to 4,000 persons in Kaduna	District Head of Rigachikun, thanked the Army Chief for the gesture and appealed for such to be replicated in neighbouring communities. He attributed the peaceful coexistence being enjoyed in the community to the efforts of the 1 Division of the Nigerian Army Kaduna and urged them to sustain the tempo.
7.	2017	Army	Oyo	Army offers free	One of the

				medical service to 2,000 in Ibadan	beneficiaries, 77 years old, described the medical outreach as a 'blessing' to him, coming at a time he needed a solution for two of his major health challenges.
8.	2019	Army	Oyo	Nigerian Army: Over 1,000 persons benefit from free medical care in Ibadan	One of the beneficiaries said the medical outreach was a great opportunity for those nursing one illness or the other to get treated for free.
9.	2021	Army	Enugu	3,652 Enugu Community Residents Benefit From Nigerian Army Medical Outreach	Traditional Ruler of Emene Autonomous Community thanked the Nigerian Army for a 'great gesture' of taking over the health burden of the community and providing the Emene community with qualitative healthcare free of charge.
10.	2019	Army (Women Corp)	Enugu	The Nigerian Army Women's Corps (NAWC) administered free medical treatment to 265 residents of the Amorji-Nike community in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu state.	The Traditional Ruler of Amorji-Nike Community lauded the Nigerian Army for the free drugs and other medications provided for the people of the community.
11.	2015	Army	Enugu	Army Offers Free Medical Services to Civilians	
12	2021	Army	Cross River	Free medical services for communities in	The Paramount Ruler of Obanliku Local Government

				C/River	Area expressed appreciation, assuring of the traditional ruler's support when necessary.
13.	2016	Army	Rivers	Troops Render Free Medical Services to Rivers State Community	

Source: Online Survey (2021).

Abuja (Federal Capital Territory). In 2021, the Nigerian Army under the leadership of Nigerian Army Medical Corps Col. IB Solebo initiated a medical outreach in town communities of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja: Mpape and Mabushi communities to assist the less privileged to have access to healthcare services. The Commanding Officer of 72 Special Forces Battalion, Lt. Col. A. D. Alhassan, during the exercise at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Makurdi, stated that the exercise was part of the Army's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to strengthen their relationship with the civilians. The Nigerian Army embarked on the exercise to beef up security to ensure residents of the state enjoy a peaceful environment. This implies that the military particularly the Nigerian Army performs functions other than warfare.

Sokoto State. Sokoto is one of the Seven States in North-western Nigeria which housed 8 Division of the Nigerian Army. In 2021, the 8 Division embarked on medical outreach to the Local Government Areas of the State. The outreach was conducted in the Sifawa community under Bodinga Local Government Area. The then General Officer Command (GOC) 8 Division, Sokoto, Major Gen. Usman Yusuf who during the medical exercise was represented by the Garrison Commander, Brig. Gen. Ralf Nnebeife stated that medical outreach is part of the Army's corporate social responsibility to its host communities. The medical outreach lasted for two days where the Army's medical personnel brought adequate drugs to cater for those who attended the exercise. Additionally, the Army promised to renovate a dilapidated Sifawa Primary Health Centre (PHC). This indicated the level of commitment by the Nigerian Army in assisting the civilians in the area of medical services which includes the renovation of the health facilities which will help the community in long term in addressing their healthcare challenges.

Plateau State (Jos). Jos is the capital of Plateau State and the headquarters of the 3 Division of the Nigerian Army. Plateau State is one of the Six States in North Central Nigeria. In 2021, The Nigerian Army has offered free medical services to communities of Tudun Wada, Longwa, and Federal and State Low

costs of Jos North and Jos South local government areas of Plateau State. The medical outreach helped different categories of residents including the children. The services provided services such as eye check-ups, HIV and malaria tests, and surgery. The Chief of Army Staff, represented by the Acting General Officer Commanding 3 Division of the Nigerian Army, Brig. Gen. B. A. Muhammad revealed that the medical outreach was part of activities to mark the 2021 Nigerian Army Celebration Day (NADCEL), the service is aimed at giving back to society to reduce the medical burden on the populace and put a smile on their faces. Brig. Gen. B. A. Muhammad further stated: “As we are all aware even the privileged ones in society find it difficult to willingly go for medical check-ups until overcome by health challenges or forced to do that. This medical outreach will at least afford us free medical check-ups which is the first step in solving our medical problems. I hope this opportunity will help us in further taking care of our health which is popularly referred to as our wealth.”

The above findings showed how the Nigerian Army come to the aid of their host communities not only in times of violent conflicts which Jos, Plateau State had suffered from episodes of religious and political conflicts. The free medical service to the civilians is a strategy or measure to change the thinking or perception of the residents of Jos metropolis about the military which is akin to violence.

Kaduna State. Kaduna State, like Sokoto, is located in North-western Nigeria. Kaduna is the capital of Kaduna State wherein 2019 1 Division of the Nigerian Army Kaduna in collaboration with the Nigerian Army Medical Corps organized a free medical outreach. The former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai, led Nigerian Army Medical Team to the community on Kaduna-Zaria Road to provide the rural communities with medical services. The medical services covered gynaecology, distribution of treated mosquito nets and eyeglasses, dental services, visual testing and diabetes screening. Others were glaucoma, tuberculosis and hypertension screening as well as laboratory services and malaria treatment.

Similarly, in 2021, the same 1 Division of the Nigerian Army Kaduna organized a free medical outreach where a total population of 5,000 inhabitants of Rigasa, Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State were targeted to benefit from the exercise. The exercise was part of the activities marking the 2021 Nigerian Army celebration week. The Nigerian Army stated the rationale behind the choice of Rigasa, Igabi, for the medical outreach. The reason is that the community hosts renowned military formations and civil institutions which include 1 Division NA, Nigerian Defence Academy, Nigerian Air Force Base, and Nigeria Railway Corporation Headquarters among others. The Army averred that over the years, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) such as the free medical outreach has increased the civilian-military relationship in terms of

intelligence gathering in military and sister agencies' operations. This revealed the rationale of the free medical service by the military which is to create a good working relationship with the civilians. Similarly, the residents of the communities attest that the gesture by the Nigerian Army will make the communities cooperate with the Army in different spheres.

Oyo State. Ibadan is the capital of Oyo State which is one of the six States in Southwestern Nigeria. In 2017, the Nigerian Army medical personnel provided free medical services to more than 2,000 residents of Apata in the Ibadan South-West Local Government Area. The free medical service was part of the activities for the Chief of Army Staff Annual Conference held in Ibadan, Oyo State. The finding revealed that the medical personnel provided free medical consultations, diagnosis, free drugs to the patients, as well as orientation on malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention. The medical outreach was held at the open field of Government College, Apata. The then Commander of the 2 Division of the Nigerian Army Medical and Hospital Services, Col. Samuel Adama, explained that the medical outreach provided primary healthcare services to the patients, while complicated issues are referred to the military hospital.

Similarly, in 2019, the 2 Division of the Nigerian Army provided a free medical outreach to the residents of Ibadan, the Oyo State capital. The outreach targeted about 1,000 residents of the metropolis. A representative of the 2 Division of the Nigerian Army, Maj. Mary Aluko, Public Health Specialist, 2 Division of the Nigerian Army Hospital, Ibadan, stated that they are targeting over 1,000 people for free medical treatment. Furthermore, the treatment aimed to assist the less privileged, elderly, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The Army medical specialist explained that the treatment would include Hypertension, and malaria among others while insecticide-treated mosquito nets and drugs were given freely.

Enugu State. Enugu State is one of the five States in Southeastern Nigeria. Enugu, the capital of Enugu State is where the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army is domiciled. The Nigerian Army had in 2019 organized a medical outreach that featured health counselling, and how to prepare healthy diets from locally sourced ingredients. Additionally, the medical corps conducted different tests and checks which included dental checks, free drugs, referral services, and eye checks as well as the donation of free 300 pairs of eyeglasses. Similarly, during the exercise, free insecticide-treated nets were donated to pregnant women and nursing mothers, free de-worming of children of school age, free disinfectants and multivitamins were given to malnourished children among others.

During the flag-off of the exercise, the General Officer Commanding of the then 82 Division of the Nigerian Army, Maj. Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja stated that the exercise was part of activities meant to strengthen Civil-Military-

Cooperation (CIMIC) for the ongoing Exercise, Golden Dawn in the Southeast geopolitical zone. The Exercise Golden Dawn, was a training exercise of the Nigerian Army in active collaboration with sister security agencies to rid the society of undesirable elements and criminals.

In the same vein, in 2019, the NAWC (Nigerian Army Women Corp) organized medical outreach as part of the ‘Exercise Atilogwu Udo 1’ for Sector 5 in the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army. The exercise featured health counselling, medical tests and check-ups. The team also undertook the distribution of free drugs, insecticide-treated nets and de-worming of children. Brig. Gen. Sylvester Oloyede, the former Commander of 82 Division, revealed that medical outreach was part of the Nigerian Army's efforts to win the hearts and minds of the civil populace for the enhancement of the exercise in the state.

This medical outreach has provided a good platform to further strengthen and deepen the long-standing civil-military relations. Also, Col. Dorothy Ojie, Chief of Staff of NAWC, Abuja, stated that the corps’ medical outreach was meant to solve the health challenges of remote communities. Furthermore, in 2015, more than 2000 civilians benefited from the free medical services offered by the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army, Enugu, to host communities.

The above findings portrayed how the Nigerian Army has been consistent in coming to the aid of their host communities in terms of providing free medical services. The Division of the Nigerian Army, Enugu had revealed the reason behind the frequent free medical outreach in the communities that host the Army formation which is, to have the support of the residents in discharging their duties. This is integral in helping the military to achieve the desired results of securing the country.

Cross River State. Cross River is one of the Six States in the South-South geopolitical zone or Niger-Delta region in Nigeria. In 2021, the Nigerian Army Free medical services for communities in Ogoja, Cross River State. The 130 Battalion of the Nigerian Army based in Ogoja initiated the free medical services as part of the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC). The Commanding Officer of 130 Battalion of Nigerian Army Ogoja at that time, Major Faruk Umar stated the exercise aimed to enhance the cooperation between the Nigerian Army and other citizens. The medical outreach was programmed to coincide with an operation codenamed ‘Exercise Still Water’ whose aim was also to strengthen the relationship between the military and the community. The medical services rendered to members of the community include; health awareness, health talks, medical examination, disbursement of drugs, dental checks, free eyeglasses and a host of others. The outreach was held at RCM Primary School Utanga Obanliku Local Government Area.

Rivers State. Like Cross River, Rivers is one of the Six States in the South-South geopolitical zone or Niger-Delta region in Nigeria. In the Nigerian Army in 2016, as part of activities scheduled for the field training exercise,

codenamed ‘Operation Crocodile Smile’, troops of 2 Brigade, 82 Division of the Nigerian Army conducted a clinical outreach which has a direct impact on the lives of over 500 people in Bille Community in Degema Local Government Area. The free medical outreach has featured consultation, diagnosis and eye care, blood pressure checks, free drugs, blood tests and counselling services.

Discussion of the Major Findings

From the above table, the tremendous efforts of the Nigerian Army in healthcare delivery pro bono in Nigeria. These efforts enabled host communities of military formations to have access to clinical services not only at no cost but by well-trained medical personnel of the Nigerian Army. Free medical services are one of the many humanitarian services that the Directorate of Civil-Military Relations of the Nigerian Army carry out annually to enhance their relationship with their host communities and the civilian population in general. Since 2010 when the Civil-Military Directorate was established, the Medical Corp has been deeply involved in delivering quality healthcare services to its target population to improve their wellbeing.

The findings showed that among the Nigerian military, the Nigerian Army is the segment of the military that has been involved frequently in medical outreach more than the Air Force and the Nigerian Navy this is because the Army has more formations than the Navy and Air Force located within the civilian population. The findings showed that in an attempt to win the minds and trust of the civilians as a result of the decades of military rule which made the civilians to developed fear for the military, the Civil-Military Department has made medical outreach an important activity that is carried out at frequent intervals by the different military formations. This is in agreement with the conclusion of a desk review which concluded that the essence of health outreach is to promote the health of vulnerable populations which depends heavily on the peculiar health need and project of the community and the decision of the funders or providers¹².

Similarly, the targeted civilians in various communities where the medical or clinical outreaches were conducted had expressed their elation over the gesture by the Nigerian Army in helping them to have access to free medical services which was beyond the reach of many of the rural dwellers either because of poverty to afford the medical bills or non-availability of the healthcare facilities in the rural communities. This agrees with the findings which found that many military medical clinics and hospitals provide extensive

¹² H. Y. Shin, K. Y. Kim, P. Kang, *Concept Analysis Of Community Health Outreach*, “BMC Health Services Research”, 2020, 20:417, pp. 1-9.

medical treatment to their countries' civilian populations, a relationship that is often overlooked in country-level health security initiatives¹³.

Conclusion

Concluding the above findings, the Nigerian Army has been more active in using medical outreach as part of the strategy under the Directorate of the Civil-Military Relations of the Nigerian Army. This has positively impacted the lives of the targeted population in Nigeria through effective treatment of disease and free medication to people who cannot afford the medical bills and other charges in conventional Hospitals or Clinics due to financial constraints.

The Nigerian Army has 7 Divisions, and in each division, there are three brigades. This made the Nigerian Army have the highest number of formations established across Nigeria hence closer to the civilians than the Navy and Air Force. Free medical or clinical outreach has become a strong weapon in changing the perception of Nigerians regarding the military which was known to be hostile and brutal to the civilians during the military regimes from 1989 to 1999. Similarly, the medical outreach from the responses of the beneficiaries has made the civilians understand the military is established to defend and provide necessary assistance to the citizens not to be viewed as enemies of the citizens. This is one of the integral roles of the Directorate of Civil-Military Relations under the office of Chief Civil-Military Affairs of the Nigerian Army. However, the activities fashioned to restore or build the confidence of the civilians in the military do not only focus on medical or clinical outreach but there are also a series of initiatives such as the provision of water and sanitation facilities to the community, assisting schools (primary and secondary) with educational facilities. Therefore, the medical outreach initiated and funded by the Army is within the realm of military medicine in peacetime which from time to time in Nigeria, contributes to their quota in improving access to health services for their host communities either in urban or rural areas providing free health services and activities. The healthcare services delivered by the Army have created harmonious co-existence between the military and the civilians in Nigeria, particularly in communities where military formations are sited which is the rationale behind the establishment of the Directorate of Civil-Military Relations in 2010 by the Army. The Army has succeeded in delivering healthcare service to the needy free and at their doorsteps in some areas in Nigeria.

¹³ B. M. Forshey, A. K. Woodward, J. L. Sanchez, S. R. Petzing, *Military participation in health security: analysis of Joint External Evaluation mission reports and National Action Plans for Health Security*, "Draft" 2020, pp. 1-19.

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