



# STALKING IN THE CONTEXT OF DELUSION OF LOVE (DE CLERAMBAULT SYNDROME) AND DELUSION OF PREGNANCY: DEMOGRAPHICS, TYPOLOGY, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS.

UCHE NWAOPARA <sup>1</sup>, BEATRICE NWAOPARA <sup>2</sup>.

1. Department of Mental Health, Federal Medical Center, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
2. Public Health Department, Post Graduate School, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

## ABSTRACT

### Introduction:

Stalking is in the forefront of public, legal, and law enforcement attention, with huge implications for the society and it can occur in the contexts of Delusion of Love and Delusion of pregnancy.

**Materials and Methods:** The study locations were the Federal Medical Center, Yenagoa, and the Military Hospital, Port Harcourt. The study via a convenient sampling method, included 57 patients with the diagnosis of Delusional Disorders of Love and Pregnancy over a 2-year old period (between January 2021 to December 2022), with associated stalking behaviors, using a cross-sectional descriptive study design. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 software.

**Results:** Stalking was commoner among the 26-35 year age group with a frequency of 29 (50.9%) and among the female gender (94.7%). Delusion of Love was present alone in 32 (56.1%) of stalkers reviewed, Delusion of Pregnancy was present alone in 5 (8.8%) and Delusion of Love is co-existed with Delusion of Pregnancy in 20 (35.1%). Past psychiatric history was the most prevalent stalking Typology noted and Schizophrenia was the most prevalent past psychiatric disorder found. Legal aspects of stalking among participants were statistically significant ( $X^2=23.45$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.00$ ). The results showed that there was no history of violence in 13.8% of participants with the involvement of the Police in 24.8%, of the cases and there was Judicial intervention in 5.3% of participants.

**Conclusions:** Stalking is a complex phenomenon that complicates Delusions of Love and Pregnancy. There is, therefore, the need for increased awareness of the etiological, legal, psychiatric, and emerging issues associated with them, as espoused in this study.

**Keywords:** Delusion, love, delusional disorder, pregnancy, Stalking, Cybercrime, Crime, legal

## INTRODUCTION

Delusion of love is a rare condition in which the patient, referred to as the subject, develops the belief that he or she is loved from afar by another person, called the object (Kelly, 2018). The subject is generally female (Sampogna et al, 2020). These female subjects are reported to be, predominantly single, heterosexual, educated individuals in their mid-30s who had pursued their victims for more than a year (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). However, men predominate in forensic samples (Kelly, 2018). It is noteworthy, however, that many gender differences in delusional disorders may be attributable to socio-cultural factors, and therefore, levels of female hormones, have been noted to influence symptom expression in women and mediate the expression of psychiatric comorbidities (Gonzalez-Rodriguez et al, 2022). The object is usually perceived to be a male belonging to a higher social class, usually married, known or unknown, or even an imaginary or deceased person (Kelly, 2018, Sampogna et al, 2020). This recourse to social class reflects a sociopolitical element in the construction of love (Soloski et al, 2013). Usually, the delusion of love has a slow and gradual onset, with a course predominantly chronic (Lori, 2021). The disorder is characterized by serious problematic behaviors, including stalking behaviors, repetitive calling, unexpected visits, or continuous attempts to send gifts or letters (Lori, 2021). According to the world-renowned

stalking typology, developed in Australia, there is a construct to formulate why certain people engage in stalking by understanding their behaviors, motivations, and trajectories (Mullen et al, 2008). In the construct developed by Mullen, et al, in 2008, three elements help guide decisions about where the stalker falls in the typology, which includes, establishing the nature of the prior relationship between the stalker and target, the original function of the stalking, which is, the initial motivation driving the behavior, and the psychiatric status of the stalker. In the case of delusion of love, the motivation for stalking behavior noted is love, and the objects may become victims of violence, including those, that stand in the way of their delusional love (Mullen & Pathe, 1994). This tendency for violent behavior toward the victim was higher if there had been prior sexual intimate relations, between males, and their female stalkers, with the risk, said to be higher than average (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). The clinical importance of this sub-group of stalkers is emphasized, as are their relevance and judicial responses to stalking, which needs to be highlighted, as the victims, are usually pursued, pestered, and threatened (Schneider & Tress, 2005). In many cases, the stalker resorts to physical violence, and may even commit murder, which may come up, for judicial adjudication (Mullen & Pathe, 1994). It has been noted in a related study, that, unlike male stalkers who often pursue their victims to restore intimacy, female stalkers, often pursued their victims to establish intimacy (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5), De Clerambaut syndrome is included in the erotomaniac type of delusional disorder (Repper et al, 2013). This disorder is usually neglected in psychiatric practice and almost forgotten by modern psychiatrists (Schneider & Tress, 2005, Porter, 2014, Fiorillo & Ventriglio, 2020).

Delusion of pregnancy, on the other hand, is also a rare condition when compared with delusional disorders, which are generally known to be common psychiatric disorders (Madhubrata, et al, 2022). Delusion of pregnancy, had been noted, to be an etiologically heterogeneous phenomenon (Esquirol, 1998). Therefore, a range of aetio-pathological mechanisms has been implicated in the causation of this disorder. (Madhubrata, et al, 2022). Both biological and psychological factors have been postulated in the causation of this symptom (Bera & Sarkar, 2015). This heterogeneous symptom of delusion of pregnancy, is reported to emerge during the course of various neuropsychiatric disorders (Bera & Sarkar, 2015). Notably, both delusional disorders react to non-response of their behavior, with anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorders, which need to be recognized and treated (Schneider & Tress, 2005). The delusional disorder most often occurs in middle to late life, with the average age of

onset being 40 years (Cleveland clinic, 2022). Although delusions might be a symptom of more common disorders, such as schizophrenia, delusional disorder itself is rather rare. Approximately 0.05% to 0.1% of the adult population has a delusional disorder (Cleveland clinic, 2022).

It had been reported that, after many years of neglect, delusional disorders are becoming of immense interest to psychiatrists, and researchers, with the bid to define their characteristics, on the rise (Munro, 1995). It is well-known that there is a paucity of data on the delusion of love and pregnancy. A review of articles on delusion of pregnancy, available in the literature, and data, from all over the world, showed mainly case reviews. However, the rarity of these conditions has precluded systematic large-scale studies. This study, therefore, aims to interrogate these two disorders, often neglected in psychiatry, with a view to exploring the prevalence, typology, associated stalking, and legal risks, in other to contribute to the body of knowledge, on these two often neglected disorders. This study is the first report of delusional disorders in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria from the available literature. It, therefore, offers clinical implications for clinicians and even society at large.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Setting/Location**

The study locations are the Federal Medical Center, Yenagoa, and the Military Hospital, Port Harcourt. Federal Medical Centre Yenagoa, also known as FMC Yenagoa, is the biggest and outstanding Hospital in the heart of Yenagoa, situated in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. It provides a comprehensive and prompt health care delivery system, The services offered range from mother and child delivery to Optometric, Ear Nose and Throat (ENT), Orthopedic, Mental Health, etc. The Military Hospital, Port Harcourt, formerly called Delta Clinic. is an Armed Forces health facility in New GRA, Port Harcourt local government area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The hospital was originally built by Shell-BP in the early '60s and is being upgraded to the level of a tertiary health facility, providing specialist services of medicine in multiple disciplines.

## Data Collection

The subjects in our study were selected from medical records of Outpatient Psychiatric Department of the Federal Medical Center and the Military Hospital Port Harcourt Psychiatry Clinic. The study included 57 patients with the diagnosis of Delusional Disorders of Love and Pregnancy (according to DSM -IV) criteria over a 2-year old period (between January 2021 to December 2022). The data and information about the patient's current and past Psychiatric history was obtained from the outpatient psychiatric records.

## Study design

This is a cross-sectional descriptive study.

## Sampling Method

Non-purposive or convenient sampling

## Target Population

57 subjects reviewed within the period formed the target population.

## Eligibility criteria

Patients with history of delusion of love and delusion of pregnancy, are eligible for inclusion, at the time of the study. Patients who did not give written informed consent to enable them participate in the study, were excluded. Subjects in which there are Substance Use Disorders.

## Analysis

The data generated were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 software. Frequencies and cross-tabulation of variables were generated to check for data entry errors and missing values. Descriptive statistics were calculated, including frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. Chi-square test for categorical variables.

## Ethics

Approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics and Research Committee. Necessary permissions and clearances were also obtained from the Military Command Authorities. Only those who provided consent to be interviewed were recruited.

## RESULT

Table 1 below; shows that the predominant age group among the stalkers was 26-35 years with a frequency of 29 (50.9%). Stalking was also found more among the female gender (94.7%). The other demographic characteristics of stalkers include that most were unemployed (56.1%), with a Secondary level of Education (70.2%), and were mostly single (71.9%).

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of stalkers**

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY (n=56)	PERCENTAGE (%)	df	Chi-square (X <sup>2</sup> )	P<0.05
<b>AGE</b>					
15-25	8	14.0			
26-35	29	50.9	3	2.21	0.53
36-45	16	28.1			
46-55	4	7.0			
<b>SEX</b>					
Male	3	5.3	1	2.85	0.09
Female	54	94.7			
<b>TRIBE</b>					
Ijaw	39	68.4			
Ibo	9	15.8			
Yoruba	3	5.3	4	2.21	0.55
Hausa	1	1.8			
Others	5	8.8			
<b>OCCUPATION STATUS</b>					
Employed	25	43.9			
Unemployed	32	56.1	1	0.20	0.65
<b>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>					
Primary	7	12.3			

Secondary	40	70.2	2	8.91	<b>0.01</b>
Tertiary	10	17.5			
<b>RELIGION</b>					
Christianity	51	89.5			
Islam	3	5.3	2	4.14	0.12
Others	3	5.3			
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>					
Single	41	71.9			
Married	10	17.5	2	2.72	0.27
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	6	10.5			
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>					
Heterosexual	46	80.7			
Homosexual	4	7.0	2	2.22	0.32
Bisexual	7	12.3			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>			

**Table 2** shows that Delusion of Love was present alone in 32 (56.1%) stalkers reviewed, Delusion of Pregnancy was present alone in 5 (8.8%) and Delusion of Love is associated with Delusion of Pregnancy in 20 (35.1%) and stalking was present in 27 (47.4%) participants, as shown below. Stalking behaviour was statistically significant ( $X^2=22.80$ ,  $p=0.00$ ). Attempts to send gifts was the most prevalent stalking behaviour and was found in 12 (22.8%) participants. Duration of stalking was also statistically significant ( $X^2=20.08$ ,  $p=0.00$ ) with the most prevalent duration of stalking being 0-6 months, found in 29 (50.9%) stalkers. Stalking Typology, Reason for stalking and Object of love were also statistically significant with values of  $X^2=28.59$ ,  $p=0.00$ ,  $X^2=17.46$ ,  $p=0.00$ ,  $X^2=44.11$ ,  $p=0.00$ , respectively. Additionally, past psychiatric history was the most prevalent stalking Typology noted, while concerning the reason for stalking, the need to establish love found in 29.8%, outweighed the need to restore love found in 19.3%. Concerning the object of love, the value with the highest frequency was the Church Pastor with a frequency of 21 (36.8%), as shown below.

**Table 2. Types of delusion and determinants and characteristics of Stalking**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b> (n=57)	<b>PERCENTAGE</b> (%)	<b>Chi-Square</b> (X <sup>2</sup> )	<b>df</b>	<b>P&lt;0.05</b>
<b>TYPE OF DELUSION</b>					
Delusion of Love Alone	32	56.1			
Delusion of pregnancy Alone	5	8.8	2.34	2	0.31
Delusion of Love with Delusion of Pregnancy	20	35.1			
<b>PRESENCE OF STALKING</b>					
YES	27	47.4	2.30	1	0.12
NO	30	52.6			
<b>STALKING BEHAVIOURS</b>					
Repetitive calls	5	8.8			
Unexpected Visits	6	10.5	20.01	4	<b>0.00</b>

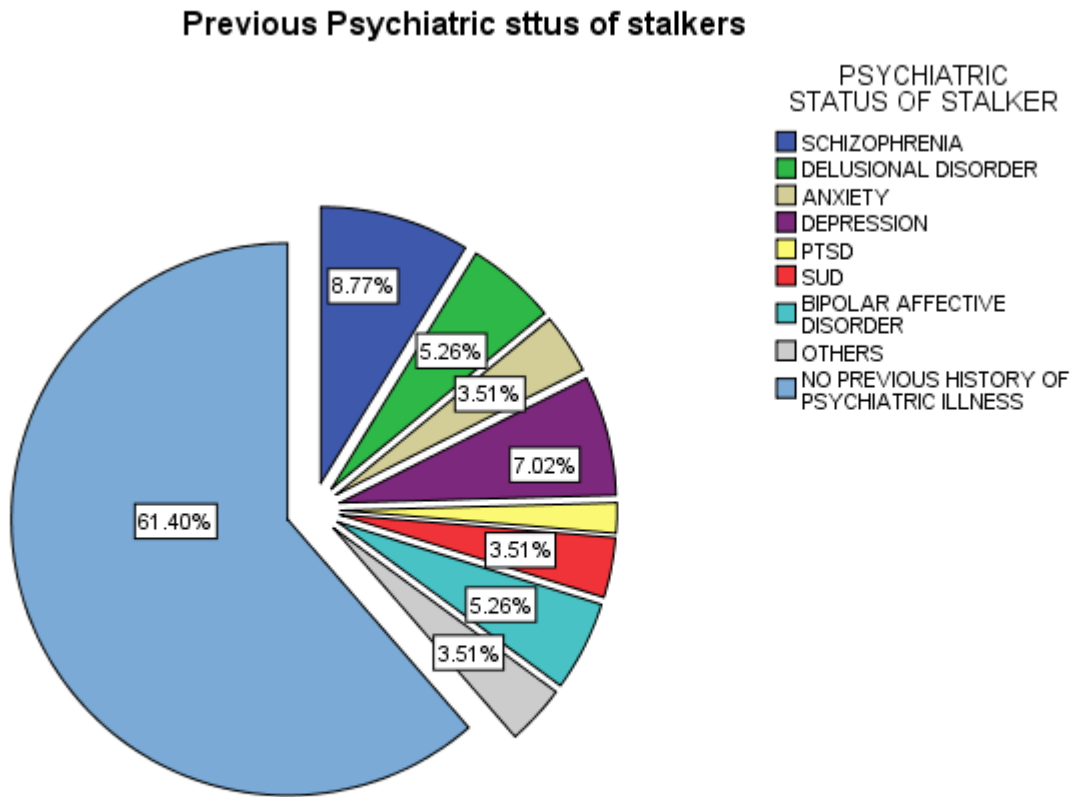


Attempts to send gifts	12	22.8			
Repetitive messages on Social media	24	42.1			
Obstruction of movement to gain attention	10	17.5			
<b>DURATION OF STALKING</b>					
0-6months	29	50.9			
7-12months	21	36.5	20.08	2	<b>0.00</b>
>12 months	7	12.3			
<b>STALKING TYPOLOGY</b>					
Prior relationship with Target	14	24.6			
Original function of Stalking	16	28.1	28.59	3	<b>0.00</b>
Psychiatric status of stalker	22	38.6			
Previous intimate sexual					

relationship with target	5	8.8			
<b>ORIGINAL REASON FOR STALKING</b>					
To establish Love	17	29.8			
To restore Love	10	19.3	17.46	2	<b>0.00</b>
NIL	30	50.9			
<b>OBJECT OF LOVE</b>					
Pastor	21	36.8			
Uncle	7	12.3			
Managing physician	9	15.8			
Other health workers	2	3.5	44.11	6	<b>0.00</b>
Politician	5	8.8			
School Teacher	10	17.5			
Others	3	5.3			
<b>TOTAL</b>	57	100			

**Figure 1** showed that Schizophrenia was the most prevalent past psychiatric disorder among the cases, with a value of 8.77%.

**Figure 1. A pie chart showing Previous Psychiatric Status of Stalkers**

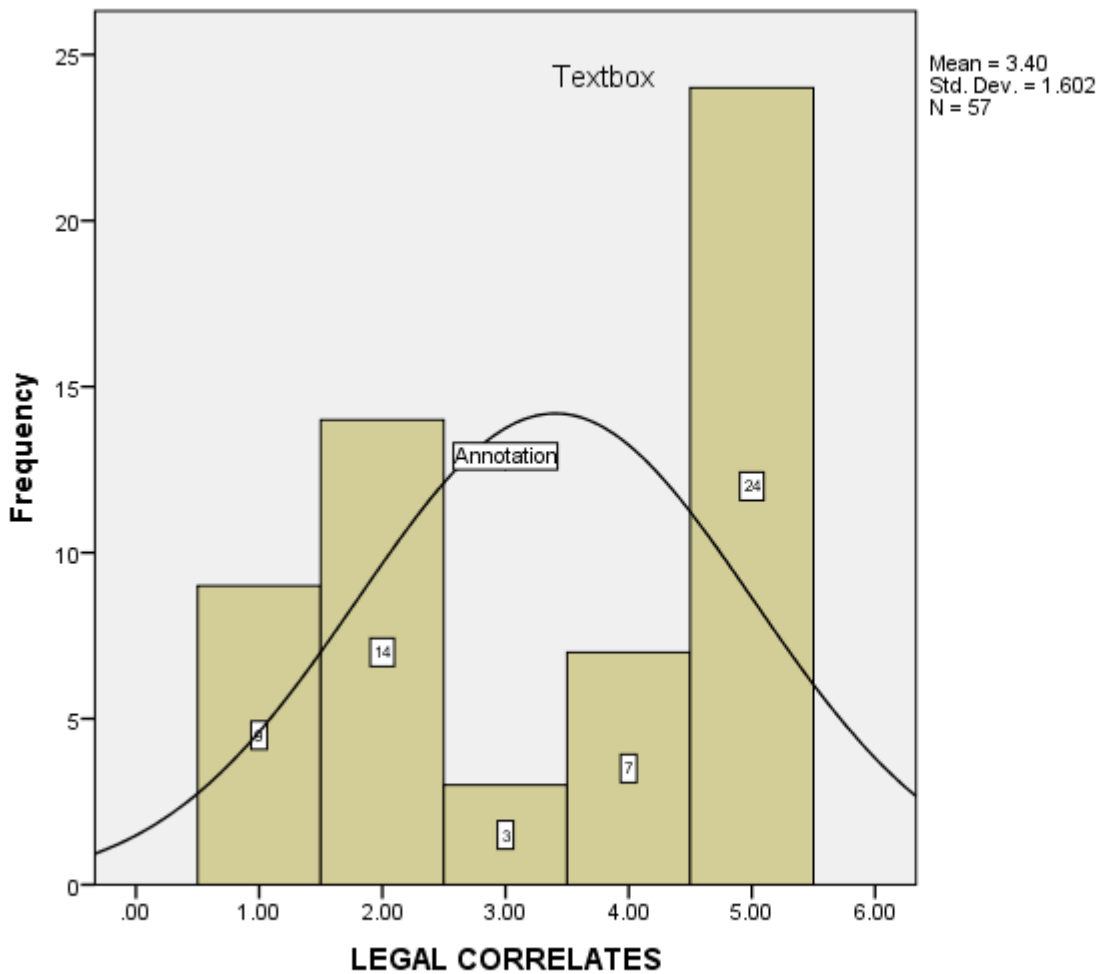


**Fig 2. A diagram showing the classification of the different types of stalkers**



**Figure 3: Histogram showing Legal aspects of Stalking by the participants using the encode command to assign a number to each string in the variable**





**Table 3**, shows that the Legal aspects of stalking among participants was statistically significant ( $X^2=23.45$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.00$ ). The results showed that there was no history of violence in 13.8% of participants with the involvement of the Police in 24.8%, and Judicial intervention in 5.3% of participants.

**Table 3: Showing Legal aspects of stalking among study participants**

Variable	Frequency (n=57)	Percentage (%)	Chi-square ( $X^2$ )	Df	P<0.05
Any history of violence	9	15.8			
Involvement of the Police	14	24.8			
Judicial intervention	3	5.3	23.45	4	<b>0.00</b>
Any harm	7	12.3			
Death	0	0.0			
Nil	24	42.1			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>			

## DISCUSSION

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

The socio-demographic findings in this study showed that the age group with slightly greater than half of the study population, where Delusion of Love was more prevalent, can be compared to the findings in a related study, in which the demographic characteristics, revealed that about half of the patients were aged 20-40 years (Bera & Sarka, 2015). Related to this, is the fact that delusional disorder most often occurs in middle to late life, with the average age of onset being 40 years (Cleveland clinic, 2022). The finding of more Delusions of Love and Delusion of Pregnancy among unemployed people in this study was in keeping with the finding in another study, which stated that the unemployed (including students and housewives) were more likely to have delusional disorders in general, as opposed to, those with a professional type of work or employed who were among the least with delusional disorders (Albanna, 1997). In the study being referred to, a vast majority of the cases were reported to be females and singles, which is consistent with the findings in this study (Albanna, 1997). The fact that female subjects engaged more in Stalking, agreed with the finding in this study, because most of the subjects, were found to be females, predominantly single, heterosexual, and educated, and pursued the victims for a long time (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). Increased risk of delusional disorders and Stalking among singles, had been attributed in a study to be due to acute loneliness, real or imagined loss of relationship, leading to Delusions of Love and Pregnancy, in a wish-fulfilling manner (Shankar, 1991). The two types of delusions were found in males in this study, which showed that it is not exclusive to females. This is because findings in previous studies also showed that Delusions of Love and Pregnancy can also occur in males (Knight, 1960, Miller & Forcier, 1992, Qureshi et al, 2001), The differences in gender had been noted to be attributable to sociocultural factors and the gender differences in the levels of female hormones, which is said to influence the expression of symptoms in women (Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 2022).

### PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY AND CORRELATES

The finding in this study, agrees with the conclusion in a related study that, both Delusions of Love and Pregnancy, occur during the course of various neuropsychiatric disorders (Bera & Sarkar, 2015). Notably, both delusional disorders react to non-response of their behavior, with anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorders,

which need to be recognized and treated (Schneider & Tress, 2005). Delusions of pregnancy had been associated with functional impairment and psychological distress (Gogia et al, 2022). Large-scale studies had been limited in the literature. However, a case study in Nigeria, discovered Delusion of Pregnancy, in a patient with Bipolar Affective Disorder (Kanu, et al, 2013). Furthermore, a review of 84 cases in a systematic study, found that Schizophrenia was the most prevalent past psychiatric history, followed by depression and bipolar disorder, which is consistent with the report in another study that the most common diagnoses were schizophrenia (35.7%), bipolar disorders (16.7%) and depression (9.5%)(Bera & Sarka, 2015). Cyberstalking is reported to cause serious psychological harm, leading to depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, alienation, and an increase in suicidal ideations in the victims, especially teenagers (Onyekonwu, 2021)

## STALKING AND TYPOLOGY

There is recourse to social class with regard to the stalker's choice of victims. This was explained by social class reflecting a sociopolitical element in the construction of love (Soloski et al, 2013). Stalking is a complex issue which involves multiple behaviors and interactions between the stalker and its targeted victim. This is exemplified by the lived experience of enduring psychological violence is multifaceted and typically omnipresent, particularly when technology admits aggressors to every place with the internet to their smart devices. This omnipresence of aggressive behavior via the internet is often referred to as "persistence" in stalking nomenclature (Basocak & Warren, 2019). Consequently, this leads to the anticipation that the stalker will force another interaction or intrusion, thereby giving a feeling in the victim, of difficulty or impossibility of escape. Therefore, the risk of persistence is the risk of prolonged intrusions against one person, which contrasts with the risk of recurrent stalking, which is the resumption of stalking against the same or a different person after a period of cessation (McEwan, et al, 2017). Stalking was found in this study to be repeated and unwanted intrusions. Furthermore, this causes persistence when the victim sets a boundary, to stop the aggression from the stalker, thereby meeting the criteria for psychological violence (Follingstad & Dehart 2000). The disorders of Delusions of Love and Pregnancy, as found in this study, is characterized by serious problematic behaviors, including stalking behaviors, repetitive calling, unexpected visits, or continuous attempts to send gifts or letters (Lori, 2021). These modes of communication are usually forced onto

the victims by the stalkers and the victims usually fear and avoid their stalker, which can be exploited as a tool of manipulation by the stalker (Mullen et al, 2008).

## **LEGAL ASPECTS OF STALKING**

In the case of delusion of love, the motivation for stalking behavior noted is love, and the objects may become victims of violence, including those, that stand in the way of their delusional love (Mullen & Pathe, 1994). There is a history of violence in this study. It is noteworthy that this tendency for violent behavior toward the victim is said to be higher if there had been prior sexual intimate relations, between males, and their female stalkers, with the risk, said to be exceeding 50 percent, in a related study (Meloy & Boyd, 2003). Judicial adjudication was noted among the cases in this study. The clinical importance of this was further buttressed by a finding that stressed the importance of judicial responses to stalking and advised that it should be highlighted and sought after sometimes, when the victims, are pursued, pestered, and threatened, against their will, with attempts at resistance (Schneider & Tress, 2005). In some earlier cases reported, there may be failed attempts at getting the attention of the victim by the stalker, leading to physical violence as found in this study (Mullen & Pathe, 1994, Meloy & Boyd, 2003). The issues of violence, harm, and even risk of homicide or murder, are issues of crime and the law which may come up for judicial adjudication (Mullen & Pathe, 1994). Consequently, legal issues may arise, when the victims apply to a court for a restraining order to stop the stalking behaviors by the stalkers, with the intention of protecting their fundamental right of the victims to be left alone (Basocak & Warren, 2019). However, such orders can be ignored, leading to unrestrained phone calls, emails, or text messages (regardless of tone or content), which can be regarded as a breach of the order, which is a criminal offense, in which the victims can seek redress (Basocak & Warren, 2019).

## **ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICIANS AND THE SOCIETY**

A range of aetio-pathological mechanisms has been implicated in the causation of this disorder, even from this study. (Madhubrata, et al, 2022). Prominent among these factors is the role of sociocultural factors in the etiology of Delusions of Love and Pregnancy. Context factors and variables related to cultural belief systems may exert influence, especially when pregnancy confers a higher value and social status (Bhattacharyya & Chaturvedi, 2001).



Also related to this is the excessive pressures women are subjected to, in order for them to have children, especially in these climes (Griengl, 2000). Another etiological factor implicated is the belief in spiritual deities in the causation of this type of delusional disorder (Qureshi et al, 2001). Psychological factors have also been postulated in the causation of this symptom (Bera & Sarkar, 2015). A related study postulated that the Delusion of love noted in some clients may be underpinned by a combination of factors like the desire for longing, disappointment, and either shame or narcissism in different social contexts (Kelly, 2018). Also related to this is the fact that lesser forms of delusional exaggeration of love had also been also been reported in some stable relationships, and might even be essential for their continued existence (Kelly, 2018). It is worthy of note that the creation of the internet meant that the accessing of the victims by the stalkers, is now much easier. Cyber stalking is an aspect of Stalking, which encompasses both online stalking and harassment acts, used to repeatedly follow, threaten, or engage in malicious behaviors, intended to humiliate, annoy, attack, threaten, alarm, offend and/or verbally abuse individuals (Onyekonwu, 2021). This implication of this, therefore, is that people could now stalk and perpetrate stalking and psychological violence, from the comfort of their homes directly to their target's pocket (Mullen et al, 2008). This is buttressed by the fact that any repeated unwanted contact whether in person, by phone, by text, by email, or even by exploiting a third party, is considered stalking; which is an indictable and criminal offense, according to the laws of the land in this country (Basocak & Warren, 2019).

### **Recommendations**

The rate of these delusional disorders might be reduced if more attention and support are given to them. This can be achieved in practical terms by increasing social support and the availability of counseling services. There should also be more advocacy on the anti-stalking legislation. The mainstream Law or primary piece of legislation addressing cyber stalking is the Cybercrime (Prohibition, and Prevention, Act of 2015. The Act which offers a powerful, coherent, and thorough institutional, legal, and regulatory framework for Nigeria's efforts to criminalize cybercrime and prevent it from happening in the first place, should be strengthened in light of the increasing incidence of stalking behaviors (Onyekonwu, 2021). Another legislation is the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, of 2015 (often known as "VAPP"), which may be interpreted to cover stalking behaviors. A person is said to commit an offense under this law when he purposefully put another person in danger of suffering physical

harm. The sad narrative is that despite having a National Cyber security Law, no government agency is in charge of overseeing our cyberspace, The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Nigerian Police (NPF) are the only law enforcement organizations that have carried out their obligations under the Act based on anecdotal findings. It is recommended therefore that they coordinate with the Office of the National Security Adviser, to strengthen their collaborative efforts in stemming stalking. Another recommendation is that systematic large scale descriptive or cohort studies should be carried out across the different regions in Nigeria. The lack of coherent data about the characteristics of Delusions of Love and Pregnancy and its characteristics, also calls for systematic documentation of literature pertaining to this symptom to inform further clinical practice and research inquiry.

## **CONCLUSION**

Stalking in the recent past, had been in the forefront of public, legal, and law enforcement attention, with huge implications for the society. Stalking can occur in the contexts of Delusion of Love and Delusion of pregnancy which are both complex heterogeneous symptom and rare conditions which may occur that during the course of various neuropsychiatric syndromes. The associated emerging issues with the advent of the use of internet and electronic devices in stalking of loved targets and the legal implications had been reviewed. It is therefore advocated in this study that the legal frameworks against stalking and more advocacy among clinicians and the society would help to stem the triad of psychological issues.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Small and narrow sample size which is not generally representative. Results may neither be generalized to the general population nor be used to make predictions about these groups.

## **Authors' contributions**

## **Financial support and sponsorship**

The authors declare that there are no financial inducement, support or sponsorship.

## **Availability of data and materials**

The data set used and analyzed during the study is available on reasonable request.

### **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

Approval for the study was obtained from the Federal Medical Center, Yenagoa, and Military Hospital Ethics and Research Committees. Necessary permissions and clearances were also obtained from the Military Authorities. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants.

### **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there are no competing interests.

### **Consent for publication**

The authors gave consent to have the paper published

### **Authors details**

Nwaopara, U. conceived the topic and got administrative and ethical approval, wrote the introduction, methodology, collected and analyzed the data, contributed to the discussion and the associated references. Nwaopara, B. contributed to the introduction, data input into SPSS, data analysis, and helped out with the referencing, and proofreading of the manuscript. Both authors proof-read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

### **REFERENCES**

- Albanna, M. (1997). Socio-demographic characteristics and outcomes of Delusional disorders in Qatar. *Qatar Medical Journal*. 6:1.
- Basocak, R, Warren, L (2019). Psychological Violence: The aspect of Stalking behaviors. *InPsych*. Available from <https://psychology.org.au>. Accessed on 9/12/22.
- Bera, S, Sarkar, S (2015). Delusion of pregnancy: A systematic review of 84 cases in the literature. *Indian J Psychol Med*. 5;37:131-7. DOI: 10.4103/0253-7176.155609.
- Bhattacharyya, S., Chatvurvedi, S. (2001). Metamorphosis of the Delusion of Pregnancy. *Can. J. Psychiatry*; 46 :561-2.

Calvo, E., & Monreal, J. A. (2022). Do Sex/Gender and Menopause Influence the Psychopathology and Comorbidity Observed in Delusional Disorders?. *Journal of clinical medicine*, 11(15), 4550.

Cleveland Clinic (2022). Delusional Disorder. Available from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9599-delusional-disorder>. Accessed 16/12/22.

Esquirol J.D (1998). Encyclopedia| Britannica. Available from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Etienne-Dominique-Esquirol>. Accessed on 15/12/22.

Federal Medical center (2022). Service for Excellence. Available from <https://fmcyenagoa.org.ng>. Accessed on 16/12/22.

Fiorillo, A, & Ventriglio, A (2020) The neglected disorders in psychiatry, *International Review of Psychiatry*, 32:5-6, 383-384, DOI: [10.1080/09540261.2020.1763665](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2020.1763665).

Follingstad, D., & D. DeHart. (2000). Defining psychological abuse of husbands toward wives: Contexts, behaviors, and typologies. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 891-920  
Griengl, H (2000). Delusional Pregnancy in a patient with Primary Sterility. *J. Psychosom. Obstetr Gynaecol*; 21:57-9.

Gogia, S., Grieb, A., Jang, A., Gordon, M. R., & Coverdale, J. (2022). Medical considerations in delusion of pregnancy: a systematic review. *Journal of psychosomatic obstetrics and gynaecology*, 43(1), 51–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0167482X.2020.1779696>.

González-Rodríguez, A., Seeman, M. V., Díaz-Pons, A., Ayesa-Arriola, R., Natividad, M., Kelly B. D. (2018). Love as delusion, delusions of love: erotomania, narcissism, and shame. *Medical humanities*, 44(1), 15–19. <https://doi.org/10.1136/medhum-2017-011198>.

Kanu, I., Coker, A., Kolade, A. (2013). Delusions of Pregnancy in a patient with Bipolar Affective Disorder: A case Report. *Niger. J. Clin. Med*; 4: 1-2.

Kelly B. D. (2018). Love as delusion, delusions of love: erotomania, narcissism and shame. *Medical humanities*, 44(1), 15–19. <https://doi.org/10.1136/medhum-2017-011198>

Knight J.A. (1960). False Pregnancy in Male. *Psychosomm Med*; 22: 260-6.

Lori. L (2021). Delusions of Love: Signs of living with Erotomania. Psych Central. Available from <https://psychcentral.com/disorder/erotomania-delusion-of-love>. Accessed on 9/12/22.

- Madhubrata, R, Sanjay, K, Alok, S, Rohith, P., (2022). Delusion of pregnancy: Conception in the brain. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*. 31: 341-345.
- McEwan, T. E., Daffern, M., Mackenzie, R., & Ogloff, J. R. P. (2017). Risk factors for stalking violence, persistence, and recurrence *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, 28(1), 38-56. doi:10.1080/14789949.2016.124718.
- Miller, L., & Forcier, K (1992). Situational Influence on development of delusions of Pregnancy in Men. *American Journal of Psychiatry*; 149: 140.
- Mullen, P, & Pathé, M. (1994). Stalking and the pathologies of love. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of psychiatry*, 28(3), 469–477. <https://doi.org/10.3109/00048679409075876>
- Mullen, P., Pathé, M., & Purcell, R. (2008). *Stalkers and their victims*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Munro A. (1995). The classification of delusional disorders. *The Psychiatric clinics of North America*, 18(2), 199–212.
- Onyekonwu Ifeatu ()2021). A Discourse on the Legislation Prohibiting Cyber Staking in Nigeria (. Available at SSRN: abstract=4289439 or <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssam.428.9439>.
- Porter R. J. (2014). Neglected areas of psychiatric practice and research. *The Australian and New Zealand journal of psychiatry*, 48(8), 695–696. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004867414543428>.
- Qureshi, N., Al-Habeeb, T., Al-Ghamdy, Y., Abdelgadir, M., Quinn. J (2001). Delusions of Pregnancy in Saudi Arabia: A Socio-cultural perspective. *Transcult Psychiatry*; 38: 231-42.
- Repper, D, Kuhl, E, Kupfer, D (2013). The DSM-5: Classification and Criteria changes. *World Psychiatry*. 12:92-98. Doi: 10.1002/wps.20050.
- Sampogna, G., Zinno, F., Giallonardo, V., Luciano, M., Del Vecchio, V., & Fiorillo, A. (2020). The de Clérambault syndrome: more than just a delusional disorder?. *International review of psychiatry (Abingdon, England)*, 32(5-6):385–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2020.1744536>.
- Schneider, C, Tress, W (2005). Stalking: an unwelcome company. *The psychopathology of a modern phenomenon*. *MMW Fortschr Med*. 2005. 147:30-33.
- Shankar, R (1991). Delusion of Pregnancy in Schizophrenia. *Br. J. Psychiatry*; 159:285-6.

Soloski, K, Pavkov, T, Sweeny, K, Wetcher, J (2013).The social construction of Love through intergenerational processes. Contemporary Family Therapy. 35 (4), doi: 101007/5/0591-013-92475.

Wikipedia (2020). Military Hospital, Port Harcourt. Available from <https://en-wikipedia.org/wiki/military-Hospital-Port-Harcourt>. Accessed on 16/12/22.

