



# TESTING THE EFFICACY, AWARENESS AND ADOPTION LEVELS OF SOCIAL MEDIA LOCAL COMEDY SKITS AS ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES FOR HYPERTENSION IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

This research tests the efficacy, awareness and adoption levels of social media local comedy skits (SMLCS) as alternative medicines for the control of stress hypertension in Nigeria. The study anchors on media and technology determinism, uses and gratifications, and dependency frameworks. The focus group, quasi-experiment, and oral interview are used for the study. 50 adult social media users with stress hypertension are purposively selected and interviewed separately. Another 50 participants form the control group, on whom medical experts administer only antihypertensive drugs and allow them to have some rest. On the other hand, to ascertain their positivity to reactive hypertension, the blood pressure of the experiment group is first taken by experts and recorded. Afterwards, they are exposed to various SMLCS for 30 minutes at the same time and environment. This is repeated after about 3 hours of the previous exposure(s). After each exposure, experts take the participants' blood pressure, and record the readings for comparisons. Findings reveal that, although SMLCS are efficacious in treating stress hypertension, the level of its awareness and adoption are still very low. Hypertension patients in Nigeria prefer using antihypertensive drugs. Again, despite their low adoption, SMLCS are efficacious because they produce laughter which normalises stress hypertension, improves patients' mood, and allays their anxiety. The blood pressure

## Article DNA

**Article Type:**  
Original research

**DOI:**  
10.5281/zenodo.17848382

**Article History:**  
Received: 27-11-2025  
Accepted: 02-12-2025  
Published: 07-12-2025

**Keywords:**  
Social media, comedy skits, alternative medicine, media and technology determinism, uses and gratifications, and dependency.

## How to Cite

Nwaezeihenatuoha, Peter Chukwughalum, & Prof. Wogu, Joseph. O.. (2025). TESTING THE EFFICACY, AWARENESS AND ADOPTION LEVELS OF SOCIAL MEDIA LOCAL COMEDY SKITS AS ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES FOR HYPERTENSION IN NIGERIA. UAR Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (UARJAHSS), 1(10), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17848382>

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*\*\*Related declarations are provided in the final section of this article.*

Of the control group actually normalises but without bringing under control their mood, or making them laugh. The major demerits of SMLCS are time consumption and high cost of operation. The study recommends that the ministry of health, doctors, hospitals, and hypertension patients should adopt SMLCS. The education ministry should create a curriculum containing SMLCS as an alternative medicine for reactive hypertension.

## **Introduction**

Technology has added another dimension to the treatment, management, and control of certain health conditions including high blood pressure. It has also revealed that the treatment of diseases is not only based on drug administration. Technology and media research have introduced better ways of handling certain ailments with little or no adverse side effects. High Blood Pressure (HBP) is one of the illnesses that have received this new innovation. Lawal and Kantaris (2024) opine that hypertension, among other common non-communicable ailments, claims 40.5 million lives annually all over the world. They also discover that hypertension disables many on daily basis in the global community. World Health Organisation (2023, March 16) publishes that “hypertension is a major cause of premature death worldwide”. Lawal and Kantaris (2024) report that “about 1.28 billion adults between the ages of 30-79 live with hypertension globally, causing 7.5 million deaths annually”. They believe that the prevalence of hypertension attacks and its consequential death and disability depend on whether the country in question is a high-income country, a low or middle income country. Nigeria belongs to a low income group and, therefore, hypertension is highly prevalent in the country.

Many causal factors of high blood pressure have been suggested to be, among other factors, old age, alcohol consumption, genetics, obesity, high-salt intake, and being physically inactive. There is also pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH) that usually occurs after 20 weeks of gestation period. Stress or reactive hypertension can be due to physical factors (e.g. pain, exercise); emotional factors (e.g. anxiety, fear, anger); psychological triggers (e.g. work-related, financial issues, relationship failures); and environmental stressors (e.g. noise, pollution, isolation). Medical science has proven that, apart from antihypertensive drugs, lifestyle changes can also help lower general high blood pressure, for instance, quitting smoking and alcohol, reduction in salt intake, exercise, rest, and sleep.

However, apart from drugs and lifestyle changes, this study takes a different perspective to revealing an alternative and complementary way of achieving the same result - even better. Jeremy et al. (2023) observe that complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is “frequently

used across the world and consists of a variety of health care approaches that are not typically part of conventional medicine or completely integrated into the country's main health care system." Alternative medicine includes, but not limited to, manual therapies such as chiropractic and osteopathy, natural products such as herbal medicines and dietary supplements, and other forms of therapies including naturopathy, homeopathy, and traditional Chinese medicine (Jeremy et al., 2023).

The dynamism that is associated with the control of stress hypertension without drugs is basically in the area of social media as a modern clinical technological tool. Therefore, this study demonstrates the role of social media comic skits and technological approach in the treatment, control, and management of stress-induced high blood pressure. It shows that stress-induced or reactive hypertension must not only be treated, managed, or controlled through lifestyle changes and medicament. It discovers the potency of a technological panacea as a new alternative therapeutic medicine perspective in the treatment, control, and management of stress-induced high blood pressure. However, the use of SMLCS to treat, control, and manage reactive high blood pressure is still a phenomenon groping for a footing in the Nigerian hospitals and homes. This is because using SMLCS as an alternative therapeutic approach to managing high blood pressure are relatively novel and an unconventional idea in the Nigerian society. It is, therefore, not yet widely accepted, established, or adopted as a conventional treatment option for stress-induced high blood pressure in the country.

This study, therefore, reveals the link between medical science and Mass Communication as a tool for health communication (Sodeinde et al., 2019). It does this by researching into and recommending the adoption of SMLCS as therapeutic options in the treatment, control, and management of stress-induced high blood pressure in Nigeria despite the skepticism and uncertainty associated with it in a country lagging behind in research, media and technology penetration and use.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria lags behind in media research, technology penetration, use, and application. This explains the flagrant ignorance associated with using social media local comedy skits (SMLCS) as alternative medicines in the treatment, control, and management of stress-induced high blood pressure. The education sector in Nigeria is ignorant of this matter, too. This is why there is no place in the Nigerian school curriculum for such alternative medicine as SMLCS in treating

reactive hypertensive patients. The ministry of health and schools of health have no place for SMLCS as a therapeutic panacea for stress-induced high blood pressure.

The Medical Association of Nigeria (MAN), medical schools, medical doctors, and nurses in the country are either ignorant of this new innovation or they purposely decide to ignore it. In addition, media researchers in Nigeria concentrate more on finance, economy, religion, and politics. Even when they research on health, healthcare, and prophylaxis, they do not investigate how SMLCS can be used to control patients' emotional state, anxiety, reactive hypertension, or other inducers of high blood pressure.

To fill the yawning gaps registered above, this research, therefore, tests the efficacy, awareness, and adoption levels of social media local comedy skits as an alternative, complementary, therapeutic medicine in the treatment, control, and management of stress-induced hypertension.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to **test** the efficacy, awareness and adoption levels of social media local comedy skits as an alternative medicine in controlling hypertension in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- 1). Discover the reason why research participants use social media local comedy skits.
- 2). Explore the therapeutic effects and efficacy of social media local comedy skits on users.
- 3). Investigate the major negative side effects experienced by users when exposed to social media local comedy skits.

### **Literature Review**

**Social media:** Torres-Pantoja et al. (2025, May 7), quoting Salisbury and Pooley (2017), declare that “the term [social media] was applied to internet platforms that were evolving towards the goal of social connection, rather than being a tool for sharing only information ... offering users a new way – or at least newly branded way – to engage with others online” [Emphasis is mine].

In simple terms, social media is a group of websites, applications, and platforms that enable users to create, share and exchange contents, or participate in social networking for the purpose of interacting with one another in a virtual community. In social media networking, we exchange or transact messages and information in the form of texts, photos, pictures, images, voices, and

videos. For instance, the comic drama skits employed in this study as dependent variables are the example of social media videos.

Some notable social media platforms from where we randomly selected the comedy skits for the study are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok, and Twitter.

**Comedy:** Comedy is the genre of literature whose sole objective is to induce laughter, create light moods, reduce tension and anxiety, and then leave the audience happy in the end. Comedy is concerned with the production of humour, and the production of humour is a creative activity. For instance, the comedies selected for this study are Mark Angel Comedy, Mr Macaroni, Oga Sabinus, Akpan Okon, Taaooma, Mr Funny, and Oyinbo Princess.

Hoy (2025, October 10) declares that the Aristotelian view of comedy holds that “it is primarily concerned with humans as social beings, rather than as private persons, and that its function is frankly corrective.” Arguing further, Hoy (2025, October 10) maintains that “the comic artist’s purpose is to hold a mirror up to society to reflect its follies and vices, in the hope that they will, as a result, be mended.” Simply put, according to Aristotle, as highlighted by Hoy (2025, October 10), a comedy, through laughter, is not meant to correct or mend the follies of an individual but that of entire society.

There are three possible deviations, contradictions, and disagreements from the Aristotle's and Hoy's view concerning the direction of the function of comedy: first, this present research does not bother itself with the social function of comedy (e.g. correction of social vices). The focus is rather on its prophylactic or therapeutic function only in the area of hypertension control. Therefore, Hoy looks at the relationship between comedy and social vices while the present article investigates the relationship between comedy and hypertension.

Second, MasterClass (2021, October 26) disagrees that comedy *only* corrects general social maladies. The group rather argues that the kind of comedy displayed determines its function. For instance, *self-deprecating comedy* “focuses on the shortcomings of a particular character or performer” as seen in the comedies of Rodney Dangerfield, a stand-up comedian. Dangerfield proves that an individual's error, not only that of society, can also be mended through the instrumentality of self-deprecating comic presentations.

Third, a comedy must not necessarily correct an error or a vice but it can merely produce humour that is simply meant to laugh, mock, or deride. For example, in Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to*

*Conquer*, Tony Lumpkin, a mischievous and uneducated stepson to Mr Hardcastle, is involved in various acts of mischief including removing Mr Hardcastle's hat to reveal his usually hidden bald-head in the presence of Mrs Oddfish, Mr Hardcastle's visitor. The way Mr Hardcastle shamefully scampers like a cat on hot bricks to hide his bald-head makes the audience laugh him to scorn. This scene does not correct any social vice, whether personal or societal. It is simply humorous.

**Skits:** Skits, in this study, are short comedy sketches, or pieces of humorous, funny performances. The major characteristics of a skit are its shortness, and its focus on a single joke or situation (Obasi & Melefa, 2022). For example, Mark Angel Comedy, Mr. Macaroni, Oga Sabinus, Akpan Okon, Taaooma, Mr. Funny, and Oyinbo Princess are the short, humorous, funny dramatic performances randomly selected for the study.

**Alternative medicine:** This comprises all the unconventional treatment options, avenues, practices, and materials employed in the treatment, control and management of certain diseases. They are also termed complementary alternative medicine (CAM) because they enhance the prophylaxis of conventional medicine and treatment. Alternative medicine includes, but not limited to, natural products such as herbal medicines and dietary supplements. There are also manual therapies such as chiropractic and osteopathy and other forms of therapies including naturopathy, homeopathy, and traditional Chinese medicine. In this study, social media local comedy skits are the most recent alternative therapeutic medicine for the treatment and control of reactive hypertension.

**Stress-Induced Hypertension:** This is the high blood pressure caused by stress. It is also called reactive hypertension because it results from or reacts to, among other factors, certain triggers and stimuli such as stress, anxiety, worry, fear, noise, pain, and tension.

### **Empirical Review**

There are recent studies on social media comedy skits as alternative therapeutic medicines. For instance, Jeremy et al. (2023) investigated "the ways in which social media is used in the context of complementary and alternative medicine in the health and medical scholarly literature." The objective of this study was to summarize the ways in which social media was used in the context of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). They observe that CAM is "frequently used across the world and consists of a variety of health care approaches that are not typically part of conventional medicine or completely integrated into the country's main health care system.

CAM includes, but not limited to, manual therapies such as chiropractic and osteopathy, natural products such as herbal medicines and dietary supplements, and other forms of therapies including naturopathy, homeopathy, and traditional Chinese medicine.”

The Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage methodological framework and uses and gratifications theory were used in this study. The review study focused on the use of social media to share health-related information and the substantial impact that complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) could have on individuals' health and wellbeing. The authors discovered that health information shared on social media was often written in lay terms. More findings stipulated that social media had the ability to influence health behaviours and beliefs, enhance patient's access to health care related resources and support; using social media, individuals engaged, interacted with, and contributed health information; social media created an environment that encouraged patient conversation and behaviour change.

Jeremy et al. (2023) did not bother themselves with the direct impact of technology (such as social media) on the patients, the people, or society. The use of social media as a complementary and alternative medicine is not complete if its impact is ignored. Another subjective misplacement discovered in the study was in theoretical framework. The Uses and Gratifications adopted for the study should not have been the only theory in a study of this kind. Technology Determinism and Media Determinism would have been additional relevant frameworks for the study. Finally, the authors simply stated what people did with social media in terms of health-related issues, and not what social media did to them as a alternative therapeutic medicine. This omission was a gap this present work filled.

Obiechina (2023) did a study to determine the use of social media skits for depression treatment among women in Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey of 330 women who were social media users. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Uses and gratifications theory was the framework for the study. The researchers used a descriptive survey in the study. The choice of survey was appropriate because the study sought to explain, describe or explore a phenomenon.

Results revealed that women used social media to control depression. However, the age of the women was an independent variable that revealed that younger women mostly used social media to control depressive mood. This was followed by middle-aged women. Older women above 40 years did not use social media skits for depression treatment. In summary, the study also showed

that self-care consciousness was a significant moderator in the relationship between social media skits and depression treatment among women. Women who possessed high awareness regarding self-care were more likely to make deliberate efforts to address their depressive mood than those who did not. The findings of Obiechina (2023) were closely related to that of the present study. Firstly, they have a similar aim of investigating the relevance of social media drama skit in depression or hypertension treatment. Secondly, uses and gratifications is a common framework.

Bhattacharjee (2023) did a research on the role of social media in shaping mental health: A discussion on new media evolution as a depression controller and revenue earner. The researcher used a random survey of 10 close-ended questionnaire administered on respondents between 25 to 35 years. Findings showed that a greater percentage of the respondents agreed that social media was powerful in managing depression, and other mental sicknesses. Secondly, social media served content creators as a means of revenue through “pay-per-click”.

Finally, Bhattacharjee (2023) did not reveal in his study how clinics and government could “effectively integrate these screening tools into existing healthcare systems and how to ensure that individuals who are identified as at risk receive appropriate and timely care”.

### **Theoretical Review**

The theories relevant to the study are Dependency framework, Technological and Media Determinism, Uses and Gratifications. Technological determinism was coined by Thorstein Veblen, an American economist and sociologist. It explores the relationship between the media or technology, and society. Technology is said to be a force driving social change. Robins and Webster (1989) predicted that the computer, a brainchild of technology, would transform the world. This transformation is seen in the way technology influences human behaviour and social communication. The social media, a powerful technological tool for social interaction, sets agenda, influences our behaviour, and persuades us to think along a given direction.

Wyatt (2008) quips that “as technology is stabilized, its design tends to dictate users' behaviours.” He states that, consequently, “technological progress equals social progress.” (Finley, 2021, April 12). To Postman (1993), society or culture interacts with technologies but cannot shape the technologies that are in use in society. He rather argues that “the uses made of technologies are largely determined by the structure of the technology itself; that is, that its

functions follow from its form." This is why social media appears to be more powerful than the traditional mass media (television, radio, and newspaper).

The mass media is a revolutionary product of technology. Therefore, media determinism should not be analysed with the exclusion of technological determinism. Media determinism focuses on the impact of the new media on society. It also tries to explain causality factors. That is, cause and effect relationships. It investigates a single cause or independent variable. Marshall McLuhan hypothetically states that "the medium is the message", an aphorism that proposes that it is the form of the new media of communication technologies, not their content that matters. This explains that the form of the media determines its nature, structure, and treatment of the content.

McLuhan believes that "the invention of the printing press led to the rise of the scientific method and later to our technological society, by forcing thinkers to put their words in linear order and their arguments in a logical progression ..." (WorldPresss.com). Summarily, technological and media determinism suggest that technology and media influence society and change the way we behave, think, act, and conduct our interpersonal relationships, our values, and the way we learn. Our psychology, our culture, education, business activities, and social life have all been influenced by technology generally and the new media particularly (Beiro, 2023, October 19).

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and Uses and Dependency Theory (UDT) are two media theories that support the function of each other. For instance, while Uses and Gratifications explains that the needs that the audience has determine media consumption, Media Dependency states that "as a person becomes increasingly dependent on media to satisfy their needs, that same media will become more important in a person's life and thereby have increased influence and effects on that person" (Ball-Rockeach & Defleur, 1976). In this study, the need of the audience is, among other desires, to use social media local comedy skits to control their hypertension to the extent that they depend fully on social media which increasingly influenced them.

## **Methods**

### **Method One: Quasi-Experimental Tests**

The mixed methods such as focus group, quasi-experiment, and oral interview were adopted for the study. To avoid undue influence and maintain strict privacy, the patients were initially

separated from one another, and interviewed to get their demographics, and answers to other private questions. To deal with the issue of variability, the tests were run under the same environmental condition, and at the same time of the day. The sample size was 50 participants pulled purposively from three clinics in Ihiala LGA, Anambra State. The clinics were randomly selected: Our Lady of Lourdes, Ihiala (30 patients); Holy Family Clinic, Ihiala (10 patients); and St Nicholas Clinic, Uli (10 patients).

Another 50 participants formed the control group, on whom the medical experts administered only antihypertensive drugs. They were also encouraged to rest for some 30 minutes. This was repeated after 3 hours on the same day, and under the same environment. On the other hand, the blood pressure of the experiment group was first taken by experts and recorded to ascertain their positivity to stress-induced hypertension. Afterwards, they were exposed to various social media local comedy skits (SMLCS) for 30 minutes. Their blood pressure readings were also taken by medical experts after each exposure to SMLCS. The social media local comedy skits randomly selected for the experiment were pulled from Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tiktok. The comedy skits randomly selected were Mark Angel Comedy, Oga Sabinus, Mr Macaroni, Taaooma, and Akpan Okon.

We placed our cut off mark for hypertension at 140/90 mmHg and above, and normal blood pressure between 90/60 and 120/79. The systolic number (number above) represents the pressure in blood vessels when the heart contracts or beats. The diastolic number (number below) represents the pressure in the vessels when the heart rests between beats.

### Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test Blood Pressure Readings of 50 Hypertension Patients

READING	STYSTOLIC & DIASTOLIC	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	PATIENTS
<b>Initial Reading Before Using SMLCS</b>	<u>140 &amp; Above</u> 90 & Above	Within stage 2 hypertension	Very High	50
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Reading After Using SMLCS</b>	<u>130 – 139</u> 80 – 89	Within stage 1 hypertension	High	50
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Reading After Using SMLCS</b>	<u>90 – 120</u> 60 – 79	Within normal range	Within Normal Range	50
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Reading After Using SMLCS</b>	<u>90 – 120</u> 60 – 79	Within normal range	Within Normal Range	50

## Analysis and Discussion

The experimental procedures that led to the above tabulated results were as follows:

**Step 1:** The pre-test was done without first exposing the participants to SMLCS, and the results indicated that all the 50 patients under the experiment group were within *stage two hypertension* which was marked “very high”. Here, our cut off mark for systolic (number above) was 140 & above while diastolic (number below) was 90 & above.

**Step 2:** This was the first stage in the *post-test* experiment. Before their blood pressure was taken, the patients were first exposed to *Mark Angel Comedy* and *Akpan Okon* for 20-30 minutes. At the end of the presentation, their blood pressure was taken, and it was discovered that the pressure had come down to *stage one hypertension*. It indicated “high”. Here, our cut off mark for the systolic (number above) was 130-139 while the diastolic (number below) was 80-89.

**Step 3:** This was the second stage in the *post-test* experiment. Here, the experimental group was exposed to yet other comic video clips (*Mr Macaroni* and *Taaoma*). At the end, their blood pressure was taken and recorded. This fell within the range of 90-120 (systolic number) and 60-79 (diastolic number). The results showed that they were now within the *NORMAL* range of blood pressure.

**Step 4:** This stage was the third and final in the *post-test* experiment. Here, the experiment group was finally exposed to *Mr Funny* and *Oga Sabinus*. Their blood pressures were taken and recorded at the end. This fell within the range of 90-120 (systolic number) and 60-79 (diastolic number). This was a repetition of step 3 to ascertain the normality and stability of their blood pressures earlier recorded at step 3. The results showed that the blood pressures of the patients were now within the stable and normal range.

## Inference

The above experiments and the results that follow are proofs that social media local comedy skits produce laughter thereby making them highly efficient, efficacious, and potent in controlling stress-induced hypertension, although the awareness level is still very low.

## Method Two: Survey & Oral Interviews

**Research Question 1:** For what reason do you use social media local comedy skits?

**Table RQ - 1**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
I use it to control hypertension	5	10 %
I use it for entertainment and pleasure	10	20 %
I use it for relaxation	15	30 %
I prefer antihypertensive drugs	20	40 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Research Question-1 (Table RQ -1) shows that out of the 50 patients, 5(10%) used SMLCS to control their hypertension; 10(20%) accepted that they used SMLCS only for entertainment and pleasure; 15(30%) claimed that they used it only when they wanted to relax. 20(40%) of the patients agreed that they used only antihypertensive drugs to control their reactive high blood pressure.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The results presented above indicate a low adoption level of social media local comedy skits (SMLCS) as treatment options for hypertension. This low adoption is, among other factors, due to poor awareness among the Nigerian hypertension patients. 25 out of the 50 informants accept that they used SMLCS only for relaxation, entertainment, and pleasure. Only 5 use it to control hypertension. Each of the above groups of patients has one reason or the other for their choice.

For instance, a participant and civil servant among those using only antihypertensive drugs states why he never likes resorting to social media local comedy skits as a panacea for hypertension. To him, “I know that people use social media comedies to be happy and, consequently, laugh away their stress, anxiety, or worries. However, network and power issues may hinder this happiness. I never struggle with network or power issues while using antihypertensive drugs, as I would if I had to resort to SMLCS.” Still on the demerits of SMLCS, another patient (a female trader) views it from the economic angle and time consumption. He says that “airtime and data cost more than hypertension drugs. I don't want to talk about its time consumption. So, I find taking hypertension drugs more convenient.”

The irony is that, in addition to entertainment, pleasure and relaxation, Robinson et al. (2025, May 16) argue that comic dramas do not only serve as agents of entertainment but also effective for anxiety reduction and emotional balance. Those that completely depend only on SMLCS to control their hypertension without using antihypertensive drugs agree that “laughter is the fastest approach to lower blood pressure. As per research humor and laughter can assist in lowering systolic blood pressure i.e. top number by around 10 points within 20 minutes merely” (Sodeinde et al., 2019).

However, on the contrary, a female participant who claims that she uses SMLCS only for entertainment and pleasure avers that she simply has penchant for comic presentations featuring local characters, but not as an alternative medicine for hypertension. Her major reason is that “social media local comedies are not necessary and effective during cases of emergency and other serious hypertension situations.” In his observation, Robert Saper, Director of Integrative Medicine for the Boston Medical Center Department of Family Medicine since 2004, quips that “these therapies rarely cure conditions, but they frequently can improve symptoms, improve patients’ quality of life and help contribute to the treatment of chronic disease.” (Healthessentials, 2023, October 27).

**Research Question 2:** What therapeutic effects and efficacy do social media local comedy skits have on you?

**Table RQ - 2**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
It normalises my blood pressure	8	16%
It leaves me happy and relieved	28	56 %
It reduces my tension and anxiety	12	24 %
There is no significant therapeutic effect	2	4 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table RQ-2 presents the responses of the 50 informants on the therapeutic effects of their exposure to SMLCS. 28(56%) accept that it leaves them happy and relieved while 12(24%)

admit that it reduces their tension and anxiety. 8(16%) strongly believe that SMLCS normalise their blood pressure. 2(4%) claim that SMLCS never produce any significant therapeutic effect on them.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

From Table RQ-2 above, we can deduce that 48 patients out of 50 accept that SMLCS really produce certain emotional effects on them. This means that 96% of the informants tested positive to the therapeutic efficacy of social media local comedy skits. However, only 8 patients agree that SMLCS are alternative medicines for reactive hypertension. This represents a very low effect in terms of SMLCS as alternative medicines for hypertension. However, in terms of emotional and psychological effects, SMLCS are found to have high efficacy, especially in the areas of stress or anxiety reduction, and emotion control.

The findings of Paras Hospital, India, corroborate the foregoing claim. Para Hospital found out that “participants watched a 20 minute humor video clip. They watched an intense war movie as well of 20 minutes. Post this their blood pressure was measured by researchers. It was found that post watching the funny clip, the patients not only exhibited lowered blood pressures but also their cholesterol levels were better. The war movie had no effect though on the health of the patients, other than leaving them emotionally drained” (Paras Health, 2020, April 19).

Para Hospital discovers that laughter is a major product of SMLCS that plays an important role in helping to reduce tension, worry, and anxiety thereby bringing hypertension under control. “How does laughter have an impact on our Blood Pressure?” The Para Group asks. The researchers explain that the stress hormones are the answer. When we are tickled by a funny bone, stress hormones levels go down in relation to the rising blood pressure”. Generally, laughter is good for the heart because it obliterates such hypertension triggers as worry, fear, anxiety, tension, and anger.

Furthermore, “it maintains healthy endothelium and decreases the risk of any cardiovascular problems, strokes and heart attacks” (Paras Health, 2020, April 19). The findings of Mayo Clinic (2023, September 22) support that of Paras Hospital. It discovers that the “rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, and it can increase and then decrease your heart rate and blood pressure.” What was the result? “A good, relaxed feeling” (Ford, 2019).

**Research Question 3:** What is the major negative side effect experienced when exposed to social media local comedy skits?

**Table RQ - 3**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
There is excess laughter that worsens my headache	4	8 %
There are unnecessary exaggerations leading to boredom	2	4 %
There is usually suspense leaving me unhappy and anxious	5	10 %
It consumes time and money (data or airtime)	21	42 %
It confines me to a place for a long time thereby leading to sedentariness	12	24 %
There is usually technical failure (battery, network issues, etc)	6	12 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table RQ - 3 presents the negative effects experienced by the participants while watching social media local comedy skits. 21(42%) respondents complain that they consume time and money (data or airtime). 12(24%) participants report that SMLCS really confine them to a place for minutes or hours leading to sedentariness. 6(12%) aver that their problem with SMLCS is technical failures such as battery or network issues. Suspense, an element of literary and dramatic art, is another issue that 5(10%) of the respondents report against. 4(8%) of the patients quip that the laughter produced by SMLCS worsens their condition and increases their hypertension-induced headaches. Finally, 2(4%) of the informants retort that some of the SMLCS contain unnecessary exaggerations which render the comic skits insipid and boring.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The highest number of respondents 21(42%) complain that SMLCS consume time and money. A female patient comments that “sitting at a spot and spending time on social media watching comic dramas renders me highly inactive. In addition, a lot of expenses are encountered surfing the social media for comic dramas; for instance, phone maintenance, repairs, and recharging for data and airtime. This is the only thing I have against social media skits entirely”. According to Kemp (2023, January 26), the time spent on the internet varies by location, age, and gender. However, putting all these variables together, internet users especially “working-age internet

users spent an average of almost 7 hours per day online, but that's fallen to 6 hours and 37 minutes per day in the most recent wave of research”.

What about the economic angle? In the work of Simon (2022, April): “Social Media Skit Industry in Nigeria: Economy, Power, Tensions”, he discovered that “as thousands of viewers watch the videos and are exposed to the ads, the content creators get paid”. Who pays the content creators? The viewers do. Among these viewing audiences are those patients who use SMLCS to control their hypertension. It should be noted that the time and money spent on SMLCS are always bigger than that spent on antihypertensive drugs when controlling stress-induced hypertension.

Some patients and SMLCS users have also reported technical failures as mediating variables and factors hindering the success of SMLCS in controlling emotions, worries, anxieties, and stress-induced hypertension. For instance, one of the patients, a septuagenarian and retired teacher, avers that “at times, battery and network issues hinder me from using my android phone for hypertension control, especially when my case requires urgent attention.” Other respondents view it from the perspective of humour and laughter which can increase their headaches and worsen their conditions. Research has also shown that laughter is a powerful product of SMLCS that brings emotions under control (Sodeinde et al., 2019). So, the polarised function of SMLCS is that in trying to control hypertension with the resultant laughter, they end up increasing headaches in most patients.

Finally, our argument is that, despite the skepticism and low awareness that SMLCS have received as alternative therapeutic medicines in the treatment and control of reactive hypertension, their efficiency and efficacy have not been doubted. Sodeinde et al. (2019) strongly maintain that “laughter is the fastest approach to lower blood pressure. As per research humor and laughter can assist in lowering systolic blood pressure i.e. top number by around 10 points within 20 minutes merely.”

## **Conclusion**

This study has proven that social media local comedy skits are powerful alternative medicines for the treatment and control of reactive hypertension. However, they have received very low attention, awareness and adoption in Nigeria. Three research objectives guide the study such as to discover the reason why research participants use social media local comedy skits; explore the therapeutic effects and efficacy of social media local comedy skits on users; investigate the

major negative side effects experienced by users when exposed to social media local comedy skits

Findings show that, in Nigeria, SMLCS are used by only a few patients with reactive hypertensive to bring their condition under control while many other hypertensive patients resort to antihypertensive drugs. Other hypertensive patients rather use SMLCS for entertainment, pleasure, or relaxation but not intentionally as complementary medicines; the major dysfunctions of SMLCS are time consumption and high cost of operation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- 1). The use of SMLCS to treat stress hypertension is an innovative idea that requires further exploration, testing, and validation in Nigerian.
- 2). SMLCS are not yet an evidence-based alternative medicine in Nigeria and, therefore, there is need for rigorous testing and evaluation before adopting it as a conventional treatment method.
- 3). The study has a very small sample size, which had the tendency of reducing the generalisability and reliability of the findings. For instance, only 50 participants from three clinics are picked for the study.
- 4). Participants are chosen based on a specific criterion such as those whose blood pressure is caused by stress. The study does not tell whether SMLCS can also be used to control other kinds of high blood pressures caused by pregnancy, old age, alcohol consumption, genetics, obesity, high-salt intake, and physical inactivity. This can introduce bias and limit the study's external validity.
- 5). Finally, the study is conducted within a short period of time (7 days). This has the tendency of limiting the ability to detect long-term effects or changes in blood pressures.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research, the researchers make the following recommendations:

- 1). The ministry of health, health workers, doctors, and hospitals should adopt, recommend, and publicise SMLCS as an alternative therapeutic medicines for reactive hypertension.
- 2). The education ministry should create a curriculum for primary and secondary schools containing SMLCS as a course and solution for reactive hypertension.

## Article Publication Details

This article is published in the **UAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (UARJAHSS)**, ISSN 3049-4362 (Online). In Volume 1 (2025), Issue 10 (December)

The journal is published and managed by **UAR Publisher**.

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