Relationship between Poverty and Risky Sexual Behaviours among Adolescents in Rivers State, Nigeria: A Questionnaire – Based Survey

Rosemary Ezekiel
Department of Nursing Sciences, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, PAMO University of Medical Sciences, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Anelechi Kenneth Madume
Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Paul Ledee Kua
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Rivers State University Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Michael Promise Ogolodom
Department of Radiography, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
John Nwolim Paul
Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Confidence Nkeiruka Woko
Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Rivers State Hospitals Management Board, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Chinoso Vincent Nweke
Princely Physiotherapy Clinic, Woji Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

Background: Adolescents are sexually active and tend to initiate sexual activity at an early age; this has remained a public health concern due

to the associated reproductive health risks. , This study was designed to evaluate the relationships between poverty and risky sexual behavior among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Materials and Methods: A questionnaire-based survey was conducted among 823 students from selected senior secondary schools of Rivers State, Nigeria. The questionnaire consists of two section A and section B and was designed in hardcopy, and distributed to the respondents using one-to one method with the aid of research assistants. The respondent's consent was duly sought and obtained. The respondent's private information was treated with confidentiality. Obtained data were exported into Excel software version 2007 and the analysis was done with computer software package, SPSS version 21.0(IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA, 2012). Descriptive statistics showing the frequencies and percentages were used to explain the data as appropriate and inferential statistic (Binary Logistic regression) was used to determine the association between poverty and risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. A p value less than 0.05 was set as level of statistical significance. Results: The result of the study indicated that the majority 698(86.6%) of the respondents who reported high poverty engaged in risky sexual behaviour compared to 5(2.69%) of those who reported low poverty. The full model as a whole showing the chi-square analysis result revealed a significant association between poverty and sexual behaviour (χ2 (1, N=823) =3465, P< 0.001). The result of the study further demonstrated that those who indicated been poor were 3.27 times more likely to have sexual intercourse compared to those without peer pressure (OR=3.27, 95%CI: 2.22-4.81). Conclusion: There was significant association between poverty and sexual behaviour and that those who indicated been poor were 3.27 times more likely to have sexual intercourse compared to those without peer pressure.

Keywords: Adolescent, determinants, behaviour, sexual

Introduction

In our contemporary society, researches have shown that adolescents are sexually active and tend to initiate sexual activity at an early age; this has remained a public health concern due to the associated reproductive health risks. In Nigeria, over 4 million adolescents are sexually active (NPC, 2014). Adolescent girls experience their first sexual intercourse at 15 years of age on average and 44.9% of the sexually active unmarried girls do not use any form of contraceptive methods. In 2017, the annual incidence of abortion was 41.1 per 1,000 and abortion was highest among adolescents in secondary school education living in the urban area (NPC, 2014 and Performance Monitoring Accountability (PMA), 2020 Abortion Survey Results Nigeria

April – May 2018). There are high rates of sexually transmitted infections, high morbidity and mortality in adolescents as a result of risky sexual behaviour leading to premature sexual encounters, unintended and unwanted pregnancies, abortions, with social consequences such as school dropouts and poor economic outcomes (NPC, 2018).

There are multifactorial determinants for this increase in sexual behaviour among adolescents, which include but not limited to parent relationship with their children and family environment, societal environment, cultural and traditional rules and values, economic condition, school environment, peer relationship, love and affairs, communication (mobiles, internet-prone movies etc) and rules and regulation (Shrestha, 2019), others include hormonal changes at puberty, peer influence, physiological, cultural, social, curiosity, financial gains, excessive intake of alcohol, lack of discipline, lack of comprehensive sexuality educational provision, sexual orientation, and social controls such as age of consent laws, social fitness, and economic challenges, broken homes/poor parenting, indecent media content, social/religious ceremonies, and the quest for high academic achievement, (Coleman, 2011; Lerner & Steinberg, 2013; Lansford, 2020; and Steinberg, 2013; Azuike & Nwabueze, 2013; Yode & Le Grand, 2014; United Nations Education Scientific Children Organization, 2018; Adongo, 2015). Also, poverty (socioeconomic status of the family) is a key determinant of risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. This is due to the fact that poverty is associated with the lack of food, poor housing, school dropout and engaging in income-generating activities. This contributes to an increase in transactional sex, sexual experimentation and may lead to consequences such as unintended pregnancies, abortions, and sexually transmitted infections. A study conducted by Odimegwu and Adedini (2013) of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Nigeria reported that poverty pushes adolescents into unnecessary sexual relationship and stressed that poverty is an important determinant of sexual behaviour as it plays a significant role in limiting the individual's decision-making powers in sexual relationship. There are very scanty published literatures on the poverty as a determinant of risky sexual behavior among adolescents especially in our locality, which could be help as guide for the reduction in the risky sexual behavior associated with poverty. Therefore, this study was designed to evaluate the relationships between poverty and risky sexual behavior among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods:

A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey conducted among 823 students from selected senior secondary schools across the three senatorial district (Rivers West, Rivers South and Rivers East) of Rivers State, Nigeria.

The instrument for data collection was a self-administered structured questionnaire title" poverty: a determinant of sexual behaviour questionnaire (PDSBQ)". The questionnaire consist of two section A and section B. Section A captured information on the respondents' socio-demographic variables while section B contains questions that addresses poverty as a determinant of risky sexual behavior using Yes or No responses and a 2 point Likert's scale of; high and low in line with the study objectives . Twenty copies of the printed version of the questionnaire were pre-tested among selected senior secondary school students before the commencement of data collation. A reliability of the questionnaire was performed and a Cronbach alpha reliability value of 0.89 for internal consistency was obtained. The validity of the questionnaire was computed using the index of item objective congruence (IOC) method used by previous authors (Ogolodom et al., 2020; Mbaba et al., 2021). The content validity of the questionnaire was assessed by calculating the IOC. Based on the index parameters, an IOC score >0.6 was assumed to show excellent content validity. All the scores obtained in the index study for all the items of the questionnaire after IOC analysis were >0.6.

The questionnaire was designed in hardcopy and distributed to the respondents using one-to-one method of administering questionnaire. In order to effectively collect the data, five researcher assistants who are in charge of school health services in the selected LGAs were recruited to assist in the distribution of questionnaires in the selected senior secondary schools. The completely filled copies of the questionnaires were retrieved immediately by the research assistants. The aim of the study was adequately explained in the questionnaire and the respondent's consent to participate in the study was sought before their participation. The respondent's private information was treated with confidentiality. The respondents were instructed to fill the questionnaire just once to avoid duplication of data and their participation in this study was entirely on voluntary bases. No respondents were hurt as a result of this study.

Obtained data were exported into Excel software version 2007 and the analysis was done with computer software package, SPSS version 21.0(IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA, 2012).). Descriptive statistics showing the frequencies and percentages were used to explain the data as appropriate and inferential statistic (Binary Logistic regression) was used to determine the association between poverty and risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. A p value less than 0.05 was set as level of statistical significance.

Results

Table 1 showed cross tabulation on the extent of poverty as a determinant of risky sexual behaviour of adolescents in Rivers State. The

result of the study indicated that the majority 698(86.6%) of the respondents who reported high poverty engaged in risky sexual behaviour compared to 5(2.69%) of those who reported low poverty.

Table 1. Cross tabulation on the extent of poverty as a determinant of risky sexual behaviour

Poverty	Sexual Behaviour		Total F (%)	Decision
	Yes F (%)	No F (%)		
High poverty	698(86.6%)	108(13.4%)	806(100.0%)	High
Low Poverty	5(2.69%)	12(70.6%)	17(100.0%)	Low
Total	703(85.4%)	120(14.6%)	823(100.0%)	

The full model as a whole showing the chi-square analysis result revealed a significant association between poverty and sexual behaviour ($\chi2$ (1, N=823) =3465, P< 0.001). The result of the study further demonstrated that those who indicated been poor were 3.27 times more likely to have sexual intercourse compared to those without peer pressure (OR=3.27, 95%CI: 2.22-4.81).(Table 2).

Table 2. Binary Logistic regression on association between poverty and risky sexual behaviour of adolescents

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig	Exp (OR)	95% EXP(OR)	C.I.for
								Lower	Upper
Step 1[a]	Poverty	1.19	.19	34.30	1	.00	3.27	2.22	4.81
	Constant	-3.44	.31	122.45	1	.00	.00		

Discussion

This result showed clearly that poverty is a determinant of risky sexual behaviour of adolescents in Rivers State. Thus, the result of the study further demonstrated that those who indicated been poor were 3.27 times more likely to have sexual intercourse compared to those without peer pressure. The findings of the study were not astonishing as been poor could drive an individual to beg to engaged unhealthy behaviour. This finding is in agreement with finding the study conducted by Babatude and Sanusi (2019) on sexual behaviour and experiences of sexual coercion among in - school female adolescents in south western Nigeria, the findings revealed that 337 (27.5%) of the respondents were sexually exposed and 3 (0.3%) were convinced with money. Also in agreement with this study was the study conducted by Imaledo et al. (2012) on the pattern of sexual behaviour and associated factors among undergraduate students of University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria; the study showed that13.4% of the students have had sex in exchange for gifts or money. The study conducted by

Odimegwu and Adedini (2013) on do Family Structure and Poverty Affect Sexual Risk Behaviour of Undergraduate Students in Nigeria; findings were in accordance with this present study, the study revealed that there was significant difference in family socioeconomic status in initiation of sexual intercourse and also in primary source of financial support and family structure. Majority of the respondents from poor families initiated sexual intercourse early followed by those from average families. Students who support themselves financially in the school and those supported from other unidentified sources apart from parents have initiated sex earlier than those sponsored by their parents.

This study also found that there was significant association between poverty and sexual behaviour . The result of the study further demonstrated that those who indicated been poor were 3.27 times more likely to have sexual intercourse compared to those without peer pressure. The null hypothesis which states that poverty is not a significant determinant of risky sexual behaviour was rejected. This finding implied that in majority cases poverty was a determinant of adolescent risky sexual behaviour, although the rich, average and poor all indulge in sexual intercourse. This happens when adolescents from poor background want measure up with their peer from rich background, hence, sexual health education by relevant authorities should be conducted in schools and other social gathering to empower them with adequate information consequences of sexual behaviour and help them build the ability to resist negative pressures from their peers.

Conclusion

There was significant association between poverty and sexual behaviour and that those who indicated been poor were 3.27 times more likely to have sexual intercourse compared to those without peer pressure.

Conflict of interest: None declared among the authors.

References:

1. Adongo, W. B., (2015). Assessing factors influencing early sexual initiation among adolescents (13 to 19 Years) in Ghana: *A Qualitative StudyInternational Journal of Caring Sciences 11 (1)*53, https://researchgate.net pdf
2. Azuike E. C. & Achunam, N. (2013). *Adolescent sexual behaviour and practices in Nigeria*: A Twelve-year Review. https://www.researchgate.net.
3. Babatunde, O. S., & Sanusi, R. A., (2019). Sexual behaviours andexperience of sexual coercion Among in school female adolescent in South Western. 3(45), 290-303

4. Coleman, J.C., (2011). *Nature of adolescence*, 4th edition. Routledge Publishers', Taylor and   Francis group.

5. Imaledo, J.A., Peter-Kio, O.B. &Asuquo, E.O. (2012). Pattern of risky sexual behaviourandassociated factors among students of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. *Pan African Medical Journal,* 86-88. https://www.panafrican-med-journal.com

6. Lansford, J., (2020). *Adolescent development*,cited in Biswas-Diener R., &Diener, E. (Eds), Nobatextbook series: Psychology.DEF Publishers. 1115-1119

7. Lerner, R.M., & Steinberg, L., (2013). *Handbook of adolescent psychology*,.1. Wiley Publishers. 411-416

8. Mbaba AN, Ogolodom MP, Abam R, Akram M, Alazigha N, et al. (2021) Willingness of Health Care Workers to Respond to Covid-19 Pandemic in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Health Sci J. 15 No. 1: 802.

9. National Population Commission (2014). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey*; 1. Statistics of sexually active adolescents

10. National   Population   Commission   (NPC)   (2018).Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey. (2017). Statistics of sexually active adolescents https://www.Dhsprogramme.com>pdf

11. Odimegwu, C., & Adedini, S. (2013). Do family structure and poverty affect sexual risk behaviours of undergraduate students in Nigeria? *African Journal of Reproductive Health 17 (4):*137 – 49 www.researchgate.net.

12. Ogolodom MP, Mbaba AN, Alazigha N, Erondu OF, Egbe NO, et al. (2020) Knowledge, Attitudes and Fears of HealthCare Workers towards the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic in South-South, Nigeria. Health Sci J 1:002.

13. Performance   Monitoring   Accountability   (2020).   Statistics   of abortions in Nigeria   www.nigeriahealthwatch.com>pma2020

14. Shrestha, R. (2019). Premarital Sexual Behaviour and its Impact on Health among Adolescents.*Journal of Health Promotion*, *7*, 43-52. https://doi.org/10.3126/jhp.v7i0.25496http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/14/301

15. Steinberg, L. (2013). Adolescence 10th Edition, McGraw-Hill. 60-79

16. UNESCO (2018).Technicalguidance on sexuality education: An evidence   approach. https://www.unescdoc.unesco.org/images/orf/002507/260770e.pdf

17. Yode, M., & Le Grand, T.K., (2014). Association between age at first sexual relation and some indicators of sexual behaviour among adolescents.*African Journal of reproductive health*. 6(2), 56-121.www.semanticscholar.org