

Attitude Towards Information on Contraceptives Use and Sexuality in Relation to The Society Among Public Secondary School Girls in Ebonyi State of Nigeria.

Nkiru Edith Obande-Ogbuinya¹, Lois Nnenna Omaka- Amari², Christian Okechukwu Aleke³,
Lecturer I, Department of human Kinetics and Health Education, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki
Nigeria1

Senior Lecturer, Department of human Kinetics and Health Education, Ebonyi State University
Abakaliki, Nigeria2

Lecturer II, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki,
Nigeria3

Abstract

Equipping adolescent girls with accurate information pertaining to sexuality would inculcate in them, desired values thus preventing uninformed sexual decisions, risk sexual behaviours and its consequential effects in future. This study therefore determined attitude towards information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society among public secondary school girls in Ebonyi State. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. To guide the study, two specific objectives with corresponding research questions were formulated. The population of the study comprised 63,793 public secondary school girls out of which a sample of 1,080 public secondary school girls was chosen. The sample technique adopted was multistage sampling procedure of 5stages. The instrument for the study was a self-constructed attitude towards information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society questionnaire (ATIOCUASIRSQ) framed to reflect the contents of research questions. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and the reliability coefficient of each sub-scale of the questionnaire namely; attitude towards towards contraceptives use ($r = 0.88$) and attitude towards sexuality in relation to the society ($r = 0.74$) were established. These were considered high enough for the study. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that attitude towards information on contraceptives use among secondary school girls was positive (2.86) and attitude towards information on sexuality in relation to the society among public secondary school girls was also positive (3.06). It was thus concluded that since the girls exhibited willingness and favoured receiving information on contraceptives use and also on sexuality in relation to the society, all educational stake holders should put heads together and ensure commencement of sex education in all public secondary schools in Ebonyi State to address the broad sex education components comprising information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society. The study then recommended that Curriculum planners should incorporate sex education and pregnancy programs into the secondary school curriculum in order to give the girls useful information about

pregnancy and contraceptives that would invariably grant them the freedom to discuss sexuality topics within the society thus preventing misconceptions and misinformation from peers.

Key words: Attitude, information, contraceptives use, sexuality, secondary school girls.

Introduction

The World Health Organisation (WHO), (2004), recorded an incidence rate of approximately 20 million of unsafe abortions every year as a result of pregnancy terminations (Bernstein and Rosenfield, 1998). Among girls in their adolescence age mostly in secondary schools, pregnancy presents a serious social and public health problem especially where unplanned pregnancy and premature child bearing are often associated with a girls' failure to complete her education. Her future job opportunities, hers as well as her child's economic well-being are obstructed (Shah, Solanki and Mehta, 2011)

In most parts of the world, India for instance, less than one third of the country's girls only came back to school after birth of their babies having given birth before their fourth year of secondary schools (Dreze and Murthi, 2001). A report also had it that one in ten pregnancies among secondary school girls ends in unsafe abortions with Asia, Latin America and Africa accounting for the highest numbers. To worsen the situation, such abortions most times are carried out in an unsanitary and medically unfit conditions leading to an alarming figure of 68000 deaths (WHO, 2004). The reasons could basically be attributed to probably poverty, gender inequality in reproductive health matters and above all ignorance from relevant and factual information on issues of sexuality as it relates to contraceptives use and the society at large.

Equipping young adolescent girls with accurate information pertaining to sexuality, would inculcate into them, desired values and value orientations thus preventing unforeseen uninformed sexual decisions, risk sexual behaviours and its consequential effects in future (Obande-Ogbuinya, 2015). Such information can be given in schools as a separate programme of instruction with time table schedule in form of sexuality or sex education. Sexuality education was described by Action Health Incorporated (2003), as a planned process of instruction that fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values. It also deals with the development of human skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality (Action Health Incorporated, 2003 and Sugh, 2011). WHO (2010) and Abdul, Nurullah, Imam, and Rahman (2009) emphasized that parents, educators and communities face the challenge of creating environments that support and nurture good sexual health among young girls. According to them, the youths need sexuality education that would model and teach positive self-worth, responsibility, understanding and acceptance of diversity and sexual health.

California Family Health Council, Incorporation (CFHC), (2012) noted that sexuality education is much more than anatomy and physical act of sex but involves a host of important lessons for the youth. Providing information on sexuality matters is beneficial in meeting the needs of the young girls in particular by decreasing inappropriate sexual behaviours and enhancing social skills among them (Henault, 2005). Action Health Incorporated revealed contents to be included during adolescent girls' sex education. They include information on sexual relationships, human sexual development, personal sexuality skills, sexual

behaviour, sexual health, contraceptive use and sexuality in relation to the society (Action Health Incorporated, 2003). This particular study focussed on information on contraceptives use and information on sexuality in relation to the society. The reason is that the two components were most widely captured by authors like Danya International (2003), Action Health Incorporated (2003), Guttmacher Institute (2010), Oladepo and Fayemi (2011), Advocates for Youth, (2011), Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)(2012) and Family Planning.Org (2012).

Information on contraceptives use explains contents such as contraceptive methods, use, effectiveness, benefits and risks/side effects. Robu, Segarceanu and Chirper (2011) recorded that girls tend to show more favourable attitudes to contraceptives use than their male counterparts. Attitude to condom use was noted to be positively higher among females aged 20–24 and is lower among older and married women (Guttmacher Institute, 2010).

Attitude towards abstinence as a contraceptive use among adolescent girls as pointed out by Oladepo and Fayemi (2011) was also positively high. The major factors revealed as influencing the adoption of abstinence as the best method of contraception among the girls were attributed to peer influences, unequal gender norms, adolescent social lifestyle, perceived self efficacy to adopt abstinence and the media. In the light of the above explanations, Oladepo and Fayemi advocated comprehensive sexual health education programme which encourages abstinence and other pregnancy prevention strategies. Oladepo and Fayemi (2011) further maintained that mutual fidelity and condom use should be developed and implemented in school setting.

Information on Sexuality in relation to the society includes facts about sexuality within the larger society, gender roles, sexuality and the law, sexuality and religion, sexuality and the arts, sexuality and the media (Advocates for Youth, 2011). According to the Advocates, sexuality is a component of an individual's personality, character and life. It was revealed by the authors that adolescent girls exhibited positive attitude towards information relating to sexuality and sexual decisions issues within the society. These, according to them, tend to be influenced by family, media, peers, religion and personal experiences.

Considering the outcomes of previous studies revealing willingness to be equipped with sex education among the studied Adolescents, the Researcher deemed it necessary to investigate the attitude of the girls in Ebonyi State public Schools towards receiving information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society.

Attitude entails having favourable or unfavourable evaluative reactions towards something or someone exhibited in Ones beliefs, feelings, or intended behaviour (Arnold, 2012). In determining attitude of the young girls, their feelings of like(favourable/positive attitude) or dislike (unfavourable/negative attitude) towards receiving information on contraceptive use and sexuality in relation to the society will be seen. That is to say that the present study will pre-empt the young girls' favourable or unfavourable disposition towards information on the sex education components. The girls just like their counterparts in other parts of the world exhibit the same sexual developmental traits with its challenges. Ebonyi state harbouring the public schools is a location that is people/friendly having over 2 million population of people from different parts of the country. Many with their families came from other states and tribes for educational purpose, business, white collar jobs among others.

The public secondary schools being state government owned schools, serve as a common ground where children from various families converge and interact, each coming with her own family's attitude and upbringing. It seems a more scary issue considering that none of the public secondary schools has a space in the school timetable for sex education for such would have availed the forum through which misconceptions from the girls' sociocultural backgrounds and ignorance on sexuality matters can be addressed. Who knows? Some of the secondary school girls at the end of this investigation may indicate positive attitude or negative attitude towards receiving information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society. Which ever direction, the present study intends to find out so as to mount the needful intervention suitable for the secondary school girls sexual health.

Statement of the Problem

One in ten pregnancies among secondary school girls ends in unsafe abortions with Asia, Latin America and Africa accounting for the highest numbers. To worsen the situation, such abortions most times are carried out in an unsanitary and medically unfit conditions leading to an alarming figure of 68000 deaths (WHO, 2004). Conversely, in Ebonyi State, None of the public secondary schools have sex education in its timetable as a formal programme of instruction thus leaving the girls at the mercy of their peers and members of their communities for informal sexuality information and these most times are uninformed Sources. With a well programmed sex education bordering on contraceptives use and sexuality as it relates to the society, the morbidity and mortality arising from sexual health problems can be averted. These prompted the need to ascertain attitude of the secondary school girls towards receiving information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society. It is only when the attitude has been established, that appropriate intervention can be mounted.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) What is the attitude towards information on contraceptives use among public secondary school girls?
- (2) What is the attitude towards information on sexuality in relation to the society among public secondary school girls?

Methods

Research Design

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the descriptive research design was employed.

Area of Study

The study was conducted in Ebonyi State which was created in October, 1996. The state with a landmass of about 5,935km has a population of over 2 million people. The people are multi-lingual and from different educational and religious backgrounds. This diversity in sociocultural backgrounds with

their varying informal sexuality information that may be uninformed, cannot be ruled out in influencing the secondary school girls attitude and behaviour in general, hence the choice for the location of study. With any result at the end of this study, appropriate sexuality education intervention can be mounted in the location of study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 63,793 public secondary school girls in Ebonyi State (Ebonyi State Ministry of Education Abakaliki, 2013).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample of 1080 public secondary school girls was used for the study. This amounted to approximately 1.69 per cent of the population. The sample was taken to be representative of the study population by virtue of Nwana (1981) position that 5 per cent or less sample can be drawn from a population running into a couple of thousands. The sample technique adopted was multistage sampling procedure.

The first stage involved grouping the three education zones in the state into exclusive clusters: (1) Abakaliki zone (2) Onueke zone and (3) Afikpo education zone. According to Ebonyi State Ministry of Education (2013), Abakaliki education zone has 66 secondary schools, Onueke education zone has 67 secondary schools and Afikpo education zone has 71 secondary schools making up a total of 204 secondary schools.

The second stage involved stratification of schools with female students into mixed schools and girl-only schools. The third stage involved simple random sampling technique of balloting to select four (4) mixed and two (two) girl-only schools from Abakaliki education zone, four (4) mixed and two (2) girl-only schools from Onueke education zone and four (4) mixed and two (2) girl-only schools from Afikpo education zone making up a total of twelve (12) mixed schools and six (6) girl-only schools used for the study. This amounts to a total of eighteen (18) public secondary schools with female students used for the study.

The fourth stage involved also Simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement to pick from each of the selected schools, 10 JSS 1 girls, 10 JSS 2 girls, 10 JSS 3 girls, 10 SS 1 girls, 10 SS 2 girls and 10 SS 3 girls. All these gave a total of 60 female students drawn from each of the 18 sampled schools. Consequently, that gave rise to 1080 public secondary school girls used as sample for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled: Attitude towards information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the Society Questionnaire (ATIOCUASIRSQ). The questionnaire was framed to reflect the contents of research questions and grouped according to the variables. The questionnaire was just in one section consisting attitudinal statements with 7 items containing statements on the attitude of the respondents towards information on contraceptives use and 3 items containing statements on sexuality in relation to the society.

The response was on a four points rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It is accepted by Ankit (2012) that the 4 point scale is necessary in order to extract specific response from the respondents. In their responses, 4 points were assigned to strongly agree, 3 points for agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Against each item, the respondents were requested to state their degree of agreement or disagreement regarding the information provided.

Reliability of the Instrument

This was tested using 70 secondary school girls that were not part of the study to complete the 10 - item questionnaire. The reliability of the research instrument was subjected to statistical test using Cronbach Alpha internal reliability measure to estimate the internal consistency of the scale items. The reliability coefficient of each sub-scale of the questionnaire namely; attitude towards towards contraceptives use ($r = 0.88$) and attitude towards sexuality in relation to the society ($r = 0.74$) were computed separately. The reliability coefficients were considered high enough for the study based on Ogbazi and Okpala's (1994) suggestion of 0 .60 for good instruments.

Method of Data Collection

In order to gain access to the study population, a letter of introduction was obtained from the Head, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education and presented to the principal of each of the schools under study. This enhanced the researcher and her assistants' access to the students. The researcher trained 13 research assistants for the instrument's administration and data collection from the respondents. The respondents were requested to complete and return the questionnaires immediately. This motive ensured 95.9% return rate of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Out of the 1080 copies of the questionnaire distributed among the respondents, only 1036 were valid and thus used for data analysis. On the other hand, a total of 44 copies were invalid and thus discarded. The valid data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The two research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. A criterion mean of 2.50 was set for the study. The criterion was derived by adding up the scale values and dividing the sum by the number of scale options as thus: $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50$. The method is in line with Olaitan's, 1983 criterion adapted from Likert's scaling. It could be used to classify the constructs under study for the purpose of description as was used by Nwimo and Onwunaka (2012).

In this regard, a mean of score 2.50 and above was adjudged a determinant of positive attitude towards information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society among public secondary school girls in Ebonyi state while a mean score below 2.50 was adjudged to portray a negative attitude towards information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society among the public secondary school girls in Ebonyi state. The standard deviation was used to assess how the responses differed or associated.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the attitude towards information on contraceptives use among public secondary School Girls?

Table 1: **Attitude towards Information on Contraceptives Use among Public Secondary School Girls**

S/N	Attitude Statements	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1.	I can always buy and use any form of contraceptive from nearby pharmacy/chemist shop.	2.81	1.09	positive
2.	Birth control is permissible but only for married couples.	2.90	1.15	positive
3.	My religion forbids contraceptive use of any form	2.89	1.12	Positive
4.	I am afraid of using contraceptive because of its future complications.	2.92	1.10	Positive
5.	I prefer the natural family planning methods to the artificial methods.	2.83	1.12	Positive
6.	Contraceptive use decreases sexual satisfaction in girls.	2.66	1.21	Positive
7.	Abortion should not be used as a method of contraception due to the risks involved.	3.02	1.21	Positive
	Grand mean	2.86	0.74	Positive

The data presented in Table 1 show that items 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 had the mean scores of 2.81, 2.90, 2.89, 2.92, 2.83, 2.66 and 3.02 respectively. From the data, all the items scored above the criterion mean of 2.50 with the grand mean of 2.86 while the standard deviation for all the items was 0.74. It follows then that the public secondary school girls in Ebonyi State have positive attitude towards information on contraceptive use.

Research Question 2

What is the attitude towards information on sexuality in relation to the society among public secondary school girls in Ebonyi State?

Table 2: **Attitude towards Information on Sexuality in Relation to the Society among the Secondary School Girls**

S/N	Attitude Statements	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
8.	Not everyone a girl meets is to be trusted in matters relating to sexual activities.	3.00	1.11	Positive
9.	Sexual abuse is being perpetrated more by family members or people known by the girl child.	2.93	1.05	Positive

10.	Girls and boys can be friends within the society and still respect each other's feelings.	3.25	.97	Positive
	Grand mean	3.06	0.82	Positive

The data presented in Table 2 show that items 30, 31 and 32 had the mean scores of 3.00, 2.93 and 3.25 respectively. From the data, all the items scored above the criterion mean of 2.50 with the grand mean of 3.06, while the standard deviation for all the items was 0.82. It is evident from this that the public secondary school girls in Ebonyi state have positive attitude towards information on sexuality in relation to the society.

Summary of Findings

The findings that emerged from the study after the analysis are:

1. Attitude towards information on contraceptives use among secondary school girls was positive (2.86) as indicated in Table 1.
2. Attitude towards information on sexuality in relation to the society among public secondary school girls was positive (3.06) as indicated in Table 2.

Discussion

Attitude towards Information on Contraceptive Use among Public Secondary School Girls in Ebonyi State.

Research question 1 focused on finding out attitude towards information on contraceptive use among public secondary school girls in Ebonyi state. Result in table 1 revealed that attitude towards information on contraceptives use among the public secondary school girls is positive. In other words, the female students accepted receiving information relating to contraceptives use. By their positive attitude towards receiving information on contraceptives use, the students favoured receiving information concerning any form of contraceptive as well as receiving information on the use of birth control by married couples, fear of contraceptives because of future complications, natural family planning and information on artificial methods. By the result of the study, the students also accepted that all the religions forbid contraceptive use and also agreed that use of contraceptives decrease sexual satisfaction. The respondents also agreed that abortion should not be used as method of contraception because of risks involved.

In line with the findings of the present study, Killeen (1985), Collins and Lesley (1986) and Whitaker, Johnson, Hanswood, Chiappetta, Creinin and Gold (2008) discovered that young females had more adequate knowledge and showed more favourable attitude towards contraceptive efficiency and use. The result of the present study was probably due to the fact that most girls would abhor pregnancy outside marriage and as a matter of fact, would welcome any information capable of preventing such occurrence in their lives.

Attitude towards Information on Sexuality in Relation to the Society among Public Secondary School Girls in Ebonyi State.

Research question 2 determined to find out the attitude towards information on sexuality in relation to the society among secondary school girls in Ebonyi state. Result in Table 2 indicated that attitude of the female students in Ebonyi state public secondary schools towards information on sexuality in relation to the society is positive. In other words, the female students accepted receiving information on sexuality in relation to the society. By the result, these group of students favoured getting information on sexuality within the larger society, sexuality and society, gender roles, sexuality and the law, sexuality and religion, sexuality and the arts, sexuality and the media. In showing acceptance to receiving Information on sexuality in relation to the society, the students quest for sexuality information that is honest, medically accurate and based upon verifiable scientific and behavioural theories. Such information must seem to be respecting individual differences in family, upholding religious and social values, being non-judgmental and open to all questions and concerns relating to sexuality within the society.

The result of the study was in the same accord with Kitsnasamy, Reddy and Jordan (2009) where female students across ethnic groups showed myriad of concerns related to religion and morality with regards to sexuality issues. The present finding also corroborated Omotero (2013) investigation where it was found that the adolescents were favourably disposed to sex education being introduced into schools (98%) and 76% of the adolescents wanted good books on sex education in their libraries.

The students' positive attitude towards receiving information on sexuality in relation to the society was not out of place. It may probably be that the girls need sexuality information to help them conform to societal rules and values and abstain from any sexuality behaviour inimical to the culture and values upheld by the society. No adolescent girl would cherish any form of stigmatization arising from despicable behaviour as assumed by the society.

Summary and Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made: Public secondary school girls in Ebonyi state in their various class levels from the least of the classes JSS 1 to the highest SS 3, showed positive attitude towards information on contraceptives use and sexuality in relation to the society. It is thus concluded that since the girls exhibited willingness and favoured receiving information on contraceptives use and also on sexuality in relation to the society all educational stake holders should put heads together and ensure commencement of sex education in all public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Implication of the Study

The findings of the study imply that health educators, parents, educators, care givers, religious leaders and peers may have been providing some skeletal informal sexuality information on sexual behaviour, sexual health, sexuality in relation to the society and contraceptives use hence, the girls' favourable disposition to learn more.

The result of the investigation points to the fact that every school child irrespective of class level and socio cultural background should be exposed to all relevant information concerning sexuality for a more optimal sexual health.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for the curriculum planners, Policy makers, health agencies, parents, educational stake holders and other interest groups in the area of adolescent health.

1. Curriculum planners should incorporate sex education and pregnancy programs into the school curriculum in order to give the young girls useful information about pregnancy and contraceptives use. It would avail them opportunity to discuss the topics so that they can themselves, form opinions useful for their sexual health.
2. Policy makers should develop and endorse a wide range of topics for sexuality education in relation to the society and such programs should recognize and respect the diversity of moral beliefs that may exist in the communities.

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