Prevalence and Factors Associated with Sexual Abuse Among Adolescents in Okrika Local Government Area, Rivers State

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https://doi.org/10.56201/ijmepr.v10.no6.2026.pg40.53

Abstract
Background: *Sexual abuse among adolescents is an important public-health and child-protection concern, with consequences for physical, mental, social and educational wellbeing. Evidence from school settings also suggests that abuse may be perpetrated by people known to adolescents and may remain undisclosed. The study aimed to determine the prevalence, knowledge and factors associated with sexual abuse among adolescents in Okrika Local Government Area, Rivers State.* ***Methods:*** *A cross-sectional study was conducted among 420 senior secondary school students (SS1–SS3) in selected public and private co-educational schools in Okrika Local Government Area. A multistage sampling procedure was used. Data were collected with a semi-structured interviewer-assisted questionnaire adapted from the WHO Illustrative Questionnaire for Interview-Surveys with Young People and a Nigerian adolescent sexual-initiation instrument. Data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation and logistic regression were performed at a 5% significance level.* ***Results:*** *Of the 420 respondents, 202 (48.1%) reported having experienced sexual abuse and 218 (51.9%) had not. Among those reporting abuse, 142 (33.8%) first experienced it at 10 –14 years and 60 (14.3%) at 15 – 19 years. The most frequently reported forms were unwanted touching (21.9%), verbal harassment (16.2%) and rape (10.0%). Relatives were reported as perpetrators by 15.5%, neighbours by 13.3%, and fellow students by 13.3% and teachers by 6.0%. Overall knowledge was poor among 299 (71.2%) respondents and good among 121 (28.8%). In adjusted logistic regression, respondents aged 15 – 19 years had lower odds of abuse than those aged 10 – 14 years (aOR = 0.42, 95% CI = 0.20 – 0.87, p = 0.02); females had higher odds than males (aOR = 2.66, 95% CI = 1.56 – 4.53, p < 0.001); respondents living with their fathers had lower odds than those living with both parents (aOR = 0.28, 95% CI = 0.11– 0.71, p = 0.01); respondents with unemployed parents had higher odds than those with employed parents (aOR = 4.70, 95% CI: 2.29 – 9.66, p < 0.001); and good knowledge was associated with lower odds of abuse (aOR = 0.48, 95% CI = 0.25– 0.96, p = 0.04).* ***Conclusion:*** *Sexual abuse affected nearly half of the surveyed adolescents, while overall knowledge was poor. Prevention should combine comprehensive sexuality education, strengthened parental supervision and communication, confidential school-based reporting and support mechanisms, and attention to socioeconomic vulnerability.*

Keywords: *adolescents; sexual abuse; sexual violence; knowledge; parental supervision; school*

health; Okrika; Rivers State

Introduction

Sexual abuse during adolescence is a major public-health, child-protection and human-rights concern. It encompasses sexual acts or interactions involving coercion, force, threats, exploitation or an inability to provide valid consent, and may include both contact and non-contact forms of sexual violence (UNICEF, 2024; Meydan and Finkelhor, 2020). In school settings, sexual harassment, unwanted touching, coercion and other forms of sexual violence may occur, and perpetrators may include peers, relatives, neighbours and school personnel (Elufidipe-Olumide et al., 2024; Sulaiman et al., 2021).

The burden is important because sexual victimisation can have serious physical, psychological, social and educational consequences. Evidence indicates associations with trauma-related symptoms and other adverse mental-health outcomes, while affected adolescents may also experience physical injury and disruption of schooling and social functioning (Alves et al., 2024; UNICEF, 2024). Disclosure may be constrained by stigma, fear, shame and concerns about the consequences of reporting, making confidential and accessible support systems important for prevention and response (Meydan and Finkelhor, 2020; Udigwe, 2021).

Adolescents may have incomplete or inaccurate knowledge of what constitutes sexual abuse. Previous studies have identified gaps in adolescents' understanding of the meaning, forms, warning signs and prevention of sexual abuse, even where awareness of the subject is relatively high (Maitanmi et al., 2021; Udigwe, 2021). Knowledge is therefore relevant to adolescents' ability to recognise inappropriate or coercive behaviour, protect them and identify appropriate channels for disclosure and support (Napitua and Rasmita, 2025; Rusmayanti et al., 2024).

Risk is influenced by factors operating at individual, family, peer, school and broader socioeconomic levels. Studies among school adolescents have identified age, sex, family and living circumstances, parental supervision, socioeconomic conditions and other contextual characteristics as potentially important determinants of vulnerability (Alemayehu et al., 2023; Tadesse et al., 2023). Evidence from adolescent sexual-violence research also indicates that gendered social relations and socioeconomic disadvantage can shape exposure and vulnerability, while peer and community environments may influence both risk and disclosure (Sarnquist et al., 2024; Sardinha et al., 2024).

Although evidence on adolescent sexual abuse is increasing, locally specific school-based evidence remains necessary because prevalence estimates vary according to case definitions, age groups, recall periods, populations and measurement approaches (UNICEF, 2024; Sarnquist et al., 2024). Nigerian studies have documented substantial levels of sexual violence and gaps in adolescents' knowledge, but evidence specific to Okrika Local Government Area remains limited (Elufidipe-Olumide et al., 2024; Maitanmi et al., 2021). The present study therefore examined sexual abuse among senior secondary school students in Okrika Local Government Area, Rivers State, with emphasis on prevalence, knowledge and associated factors.

Methods

Study design and setting

A cross-sectional study design was used. The study was conducted among senior secondary school students (SS1–SS3) in public and private schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Okrika is one of the local government areas of Rivers State in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The source document describes the area as including

mainland and island clusters and reports secondary schools distributed across the state and concentrated mainly in LGA headquarters and Port Harcourt.

Study population and eligibility

The study population comprised senior secondary school students in SS1, SS2 and SS3. Eligible participants were students who had spent at least one academic session in the selected school, were fully enrolled, and had their names on the class register. Students younger than 10 years or older than 19 years were excluded, consistent with the age definition applied in the source study.

Sample size and sampling

The minimum sample size was calculated using the Leslie Kish formula for a single proportion, with Z = 1.96, anticipated prevalence of 42.9%, q = 1−p and precision of 0.05, producing a minimum of 376. After allowing for 10% non-response, the calculated sample size was approximately 418 and was rounded to 420. A multistage sampling procedure was used. The 12 wards were clustered into mainland and island groups; schools were stratified into public and private co-educational schools; three schools were selected from each stratum; proportional allocation was used to distribute the 420 participants across the six selected schools; and systematic sampling was then used within SS1–SS3 registers, with a randomly selected starting point and a sampling interval of approximately six.

Data collection instrument

Data were collected using a semi-structured interviewer-assisted questionnaire adapted from the WHO Illustrative Questionnaire for Interview-Surveys with Young People and an instrument on predictors of early sexual initiation among a nationally representative sample of Nigerian adolescents. The questionnaire assessed socio-demographic characteristics, experience and characteristics of sexual abuse, knowledge of sexual abuse, and selected factors potentially associated with sexual abuse. Three research assistants with at least an Ordinary National Diploma were trained on questionnaire administration, research ethics, rapport building and item definitions.

Data management and analysis

Completed questionnaires were checked and cleaned daily. Data were entered into and analysed with SPSS version 26. Frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulations were generated. Logistic regression analysis was used to estimate crude odds ratios (cORs) and adjusted odds ratios (aORs) with 95% confidence intervals. Statistical significance was assessed at the 5% level.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Ethics Committee of Rivers State University and presented to the principals of the selected schools. Informed consent was obtained from participants according to the study protocol. Confidentiality was maintained by using serial numbers rather than names. Research assistants were trained in confidentiality, and a health talk was provided after questionnaire administration. The source document reports that feedback was intended for relevant education and health authorities and those findings would be disseminated through peer-reviewed publication.

Results

Characteristics of respondents

A total of 420 students participated. Most respondents were aged 15–19 years (251, 59.8%), while 169 (40.2%) were aged 10–14 years. Females constituted 237 (56.4%) and males 183 (43.6%). Class distribution was 147 (35.0%) in SS1, 133 (31.7%) in SS2 and 140 (33.3%) in SS3. Public co-educational schools contributed 213 (50.7%) respondents and private schools 207 (49.3%). Father's education was non-formal for 111 (26.4%), primary for 105 (25.0%), secondary for 121 (28.8%) and tertiary for 83 (19.8%). Mother's education was non-formal for 82 (19.5%), primary for 151 (36.0%), secondary for 116 (27.6%) and tertiary for 71 (16.9%).

Table 1 Distribution of respondents' sociodemographic characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
10 – 14	169	40.2
15 – 19	251	59.8
Gender		
Female	237	56.4
Male	183	43.6
Class		
SS 1	147	35.0
SS 2	133	31.7
SS 3	140	33.3
Type of school		
Private co-educational	207	49.3
Public co-educational	213	50.7
Living arrangement		
Both parents	176	41.9
Father	59	14.0
Guardian	79	18.8
Mother	106	25.2
Household size		
2 – 4	285	67.9
> 4	135	32.1
Parents marital status		
Married	218	50.7
Separated	65	15.5
Divorced	84	20.0
Widowed	58	13.8
Parent employment status		
Employed	298	71.0
Unemployed	122	29.0
Father education		
Non-formal	111	26.4
Primary	105	25.0
Secondary	121	28.8
Tertiary	83	19.8

Mother education		
Non-formal	82	19.5
Primary	151	36
Secondary	116	27.6
Tertiary	71	16.9

Prevalence and characteristics of sexual abuse

Overall, 202 (48.1%) respondents reported ever experiencing sexual abuse, while 218 (51.9%) reported no experience. Among all respondents, 142 (33.8%) reported first experience at 10–14 years and 60 (14.3%) at 15–19 years. The most frequently reported places of occurrence were friends' houses (86, 20.5%), school (59, 14.0%) and home (57, 13.6%).

Table 2 Prevalence of sexual abuse among respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Ever experienced sexual abuse		
Yes **(Prevalence)**	202	48.1
No	218	51.9
Age at first experience		
10 – 14	142	33.8
15 – 19	60	14.3
Place of experience		
Friend's house	86	20.5
Home	57	13.6
School	59	14.0
Type of experience		
Rape	42	10.0
Unwanted touching	92	21.9
Verbal harassment	68	16.2
Frequency of experience		
Once	79	18.8
Frequent	56	13.3
Infrequent	67	16.0
Perpetrator		
Neighbour	56	13.3
Relative	65	15.5
Student	56	13.3
Teacher	25	6.0
Type of perpetrator		
Neighbour	56	13.3
Relative	65	15.5
Student	56	13.3
Teacher	25	6.0
Older perpetrator		
Yes	119	28.3
No	85	20.2

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Physical injury		
Yes	83	19.8
No	119	28.3

Table 2 Prevalence of sexual abuse among respondents (Continuation)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Emotionally distressed after incidence		
Yes	113	26.9
No	89	21.2
Incident was reported		
Yes	120	28.6
No	82	19.5
Action taken		
Yes	77	18.3
No	43	10.2
Type of action		
Arrest	20	4.8
Counselling	18	4.3
Investigation	18	4.3
Treatment	21	5.0

Knowledge of sexual abuse

Although 261 (62.1%) respondents had heard of sexual abuse and 319 (76.0%) reported receiving teaching on sexual abuse, overall knowledge was poor in 299 (71.2%) and good in 121 (28.8%). Only 149 (35.5%) correctly identified the meaning as a sexual act without consent; 194 (46.2%) selected sexual act with consent and 77 (18.3%) did not know. A total of 232 (55.2%) believed students could refuse sexual advances from adults, while 188 (44.8%) did not. About 230 (54.8%) reported being able to identify forms of abuse. Unwanted touching was identified by 151 (36.0%), forced kissing by 50 (11.9%) and rape by 29 (6.9%).

Table 3 Respondents knowledge of sexual abuse

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Ever heard sexual abuse		
Yes	261	62.1
No	159	37.9
Ever received teaching on sexual abuse		
Yes	319	76.0
No	101	24.0
Knowledge of meaning		
Sexual act with consent	194	46.2
Sexual act without consent	149	35.5
I don't know	77	18.3
Possibility of students refusing advances from adults		
Yes	232	55.2
No	188	44.8

Ability to identify forms of sexual abuse		
Yes	230	54.8
No	190	45.2
Types		
Forced kissing	50	11.9
Rape	29	6.9
Unwanted touching	151	36.0
Possibility of sexual abuse in the family		
Yes	206	49.0
No	111	26.4
I don't know	103	24.5

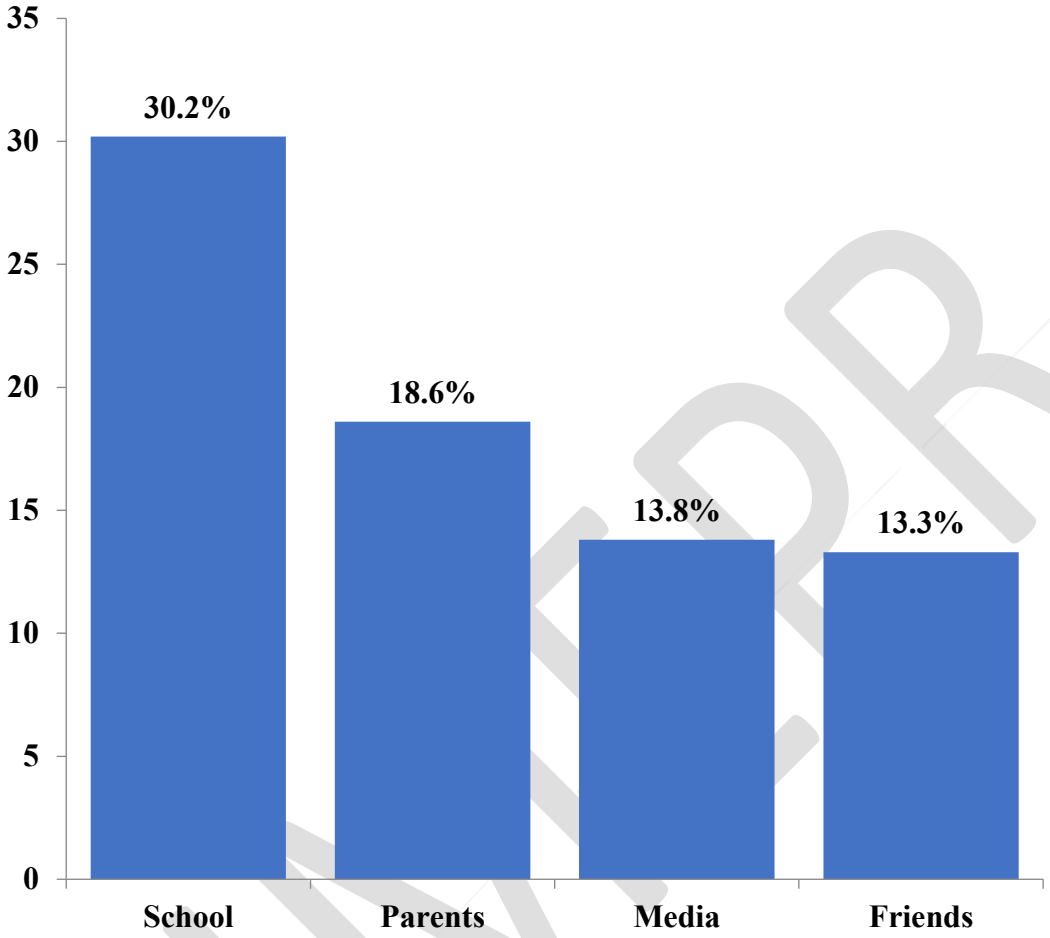
Table 3 Respondents knowledge of sexual abuse (Continuation)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sign of been sexually abused		
Fear	80	19.0
Injuries	87	20.7
Poor academic performance	104	24.8
Withdrawal	149	35.5
Knowledge of place to report sexual abuse		
Yes	264	62.9
No	156	37.1
Place		
Health facility	51	12.1
Parents	75	17.9
Police	74	17.6
Teachers	64	15.2
Overall Knowledge		
Poor	299	71.2
Good	121	28.8

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Fig 1: Respondents' source of information on sexual abuse

The main reported information sources were school (30.2%), parents (18.6%), media (13.8%) and friends (13.3%).



Factors associated with sexual abuse

After adjustment, respondents aged 15–19 years had 58% lower odds of reported sexual abuse than those aged 10–14 years. Females had 2.66 times the odds of reported abuse compared with males. Respondents living with their fathers had 72% lower odds compared with those living with both parents. Having unemployed parents was associated with 4.70 times the odds of reported abuse. Good knowledge was associated with approximately 52% lower odds compared with poor knowledge. The regression output also showed statistically significant associations for the parental-supervision and peer-pressure variables; because the coding in the source questionnaire is not fully explicit, these coefficients should be interpreted according to the original SPSS coding rather than assigning a causal direction beyond the reported reference categories. Class, type of school, household size, parents' marital status, father's education and mother's education were not statistically significant after adjustment.

Table 4 Factors associated with sexual abuse among respondents

Variable	cOR	95% CI	P-value	aOR	95% CI	P-value
Age						
10 – 14	1.00			1.00		
15 – 19	0.18	0.12 – 0.28	**0.00***	0.42	0.20 – 0.87	**0.02***
Gender						
Male	1.00			1.00		
Female	2.94	1.97 – 4.39	**0.00***	2.66	1.56 – 4.53	**0.00***
Class						
SS 1	1.00			1.00		
SS 2	0.28	0.17 – 0.45	**0.00***	0.81	0.38 – 1.96	0.72
SS 3	0.86	0.53 – 1.39	0.54	1.14	0.59 – 2.18	0.68
Type of school						
Private co-educational	0.49	0.33 – 0.72	**0.00***	0.74	0.43 – 1.27	0.28
Public co-educational	1.00			1.00		
Living arrangement						
Both parents	1.00			1.00		
Father	0.17	0.10 – 0.29	**0.00***	0.28	0.11 – 0.71	**0.01***
Guardian	1.62	0.82 – 3.21	0.17	1.54	0.64 – 3.67	0.33
Mother	1.93	1.02 – 3.67	**0.04***	2.00	0.89 – 4.50	0.09
Household size						
2 – 4	0.46	0.30 – 0.72	**0.00***	0.95	0.51 – 1.78	0.88
> 4	1.00			1.00		
Parents marital status						
Married	0.57	0.28 – 1.12	0.10	0.61	0.21 – 1.74	0.35
Separated	0.44	0.24 – 0.79	**0.00***	1.78	0.68 – 4.57	0.23
Widowed	1.28	0.61 – 2.68	0.51	1.61	0.64 – 4.05	0.31
Divorced	1.00			1.00		
Parent employment						
Employed	1.00			1.00		
Unemployed	5.32	3.26 – 8.70	**0.00***	4.70	2.29 – 9.66	**0.00***

Father education						
Non-formal	2.58	1.42 – 4.69	**0.00***	0.92	0.37 – 2.29	0.86
Primary	1.13	0.64 – 1.97	0.68	0.70	0.30 – 1.63	0.41
Secondary	1.00			1.00		
Tertiary	0.50	0.27 – 0.91	**0.02***	0.61	0.22 – 1.65	0.33

Table 4.4 Factors associated with sexual abuse among respondents (Continuation)

Variable	cOR	95% CI	P-value	aOR	95% CI	P-value
Mother education						
Non-formal	1.00			1.00		
Primary	0.22	0.11 – 0.44	**0.00***	0.79	0.28 – 2.23	0.66
Secondary	0.78	0.43 – 1.38	0.39	1.23	0.53 – 2.82	0.63
Tertiary	0.90	0.49 – 1.64	0.73	0.96	0.43 – 2.18	0.93
Influence of lack of parental supervision						
Yes	0.13	0.08 - 0.22	**0.00***	0.10	0.07 – 0.27	0.00*
No	0.19	0.11 – 0.31	**0.00***	0.15	0.06 – 0.38	0.00*
I don't know	1.00			1.00		
Influence of peer pressure						
Yes	0.29	0.18 – 0.47	**0.00***	0.45	0.13 – 0.59	0.04*
No	0.79	0.49 – 1.28	0.34	0.65	0.32 – 0.98	0.03*
I don't know	1.00			1.00		
Influence of social media						
Yes	0.36	0.24 – 0.54	**0.00***	1.19	0.55 – 2.59	0.65
No	1.00			1.00		
Overall Knowledge						
Poor	1.00			1.00		
Good	0.24	0.15 – 0.39	**0.00***	0.48	0.25 – 0.96	**0.04***

Discussion

Nearly half (48.1%) of respondents reported having experienced sexual abuse, indicating a substantial burden among the surveyed secondary-school population. The finding is broadly comparable with the 45% prevalence reported among high-school students in Ethiopia and somewhat lower than the 53.3% reported among secondary-school students in Benue State, Nigeria (Alemayehu et al., 2023; Elufidipe-Olumide et al., 2024). Differences between studies should, however, be interpreted cautiously because prevalence estimates can be affected by differences in definitions, age composition, sampling frames, recall periods and measurement instruments (Sarnquist et al., 2024; UNICEF, 2024). The high prevalence observed in the present study underscores the continuing vulnerability of school-aged adolescents to sexual violence and the need for context-specific prevention and protection measures (Meydan and Finkelhor, 2020).

The pattern of reported experiences also shows that sexual abuse was not limited to rape. Unwanted touching (21.9%) and verbal harassment (16.2%) were more frequently reported than rape (10.0%), highlighting the heterogeneous nature of sexual abuse and the importance of including non-penetrative forms in school-based assessment (UNICEF, 2024; Sulaiman et al.,

2021). Friends' houses, schools and homes were reported as important locations, while relatives, neighbours and fellow students were prominent perpetrator categories. This is consistent with evidence that perpetrators of child and adolescent sexual abuse may be people known to the victim, including family members, peers and other persons within the adolescent's social environment, thereby complicating detection and disclosure (Alemayehu et al., 2023; Elufidipe-Olumide et al., 2024). The findings on reporting are also important. Although 120 respondents (28.6% of the total sample) reported the incident, 82 (19.5%) did not. Among reported cases, action was recorded for 77 (18.3%) and no action for 43 (10.2%). These findings, together with the reported emotional distress and physical injury, reinforce the need for confidential, adolescent-friendly reporting, referral and psychosocial support pathways (Alves et al., 2024; Udigwe, 2021). The literature also indicates that stigma, fear and uncertainty about available support can discourage disclosure, making accessible and trusted reporting mechanisms essential (Meydan and Finkelhor, 2020). Because the denominators for these descriptive indicators were presented as the full sample in the source table, they should not be interpreted as percentages exclusively among survivors.

A key finding was the contrast between exposure to information and actual knowledge. Although 62.1% had heard of sexual abuse and 76.0% had received teaching, 71.2% had poor overall knowledge. Only 35.5% correctly identified sexual abuse as a sexual act without consent, while 46.2% selected an incorrect definition. This suggests that exposure to messages may not necessarily provide adolescents with sufficiently accurate or comprehensive understanding, a pattern consistent with studies reporting gaps in adolescents' knowledge despite awareness of sexual violence (Maitanmi et al., 2021; Udigwe, 2021). The finding is also consistent with studies documenting weaknesses in adolescents' recognition of the different manifestations of sexual abuse and their understanding of appropriate protective responses (Napitua and Rasmita, 2025; Rusmayanti et al., 2024). The present study identified similar weaknesses in recognising forms of abuse and family-based abuse. These gaps are important because adolescents who do not recognise coercive, unwanted or inappropriate behaviours as abusive may be less likely to disclose experiences or seek timely assistance (Meydan and Finkelhor, 2020). Schools were the most frequently reported source of information (30.2%), followed by parents (18.6%), media (13.8%) and friends (13.3%). This supports the importance of schools and families as platforms for structured prevention education, consistent with evidence that adolescents obtain information about sexual abuse through formal education, parents, peers and media (Napitua and Rasmita, 2025). However, the poor overall knowledge despite reported teaching suggests a need to improve the content, consistency and practical orientation of sexuality and child-protection education. Evidence on adolescent prevention education similarly indicates that the quality and comprehensiveness of educational interventions are important for improving knowledge and protective capacity (Ojukwu and Collins, 2025; Rusmayanti et al., 2024).

Female respondents had substantially higher adjusted odds of reported sexual abuse than males (aOR = 2.66, 95% CI = 1.56 – 4.53). This finding is consistent with broader evidence showing that adolescent girls experience a disproportionate burden of sexual and intimate-partner violence, although boys can also be victims and should not be excluded from prevention and response programmes (Sardinha et al., 2024; Okeke et al., 2023). Gender differences may reflect unequal power relations and gendered social vulnerabilities, but the cross-sectional design of the present study does not permit causal interpretation.

Age was also associated with sexual abuse. Respondents aged 15–19 years had lower adjusted odds than those aged 10–14 years (aOR = 0.42, 95% CI = 0.20 – 0.87). This finding differs from

the assumption that increasing age necessarily increases cumulative exposure and should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Differences in developmental stage, school context, reporting behaviour and the operational definition of abuse may contribute to variation across studies (Alemayehu et al., 2023; Tadesse et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the result indicates that younger adolescents should receive age-appropriate protection and prevention education. Living arrangement was associated with reported abuse: adolescents living with their fathers had lower odds than those living with both parents (aOR = 0.28, 95% CI = 0.11–0.71). The result indicates that household context may matter, although the cross-sectional design does not establish why this category had lower odds and should not be interpreted as evidence that a particular living arrangement is inherently protective. Previous research has linked family circumstances, caregiver supervision and household relationships with adolescents' vulnerability to sexual abuse and violence (Tadesse et al., 2023; Alemayehu et al., 2023).

Parental unemployment was strongly associated with reported abuse (aOR = 4.70, 95% CI = 2.29–9.66). This finding is compatible with literature linking socioeconomic disadvantage and household instability with increased vulnerability to child and adolescent abuse (Meydan and Finkelhor, 2020; Tadesse et al., 2023). Economic hardship may coexist with reduced supervision, constrained access to supportive services and greater exposure to risky environments; however, these mechanisms were not directly tested in the present cross-sectional study and therefore remain plausible explanations rather than established causal pathways.

Good knowledge was associated with lower odds of reported sexual abuse (aOR = 0.48, 95% CI = 0.25–0.96). This finding suggests a potentially protective association, because adolescents with better knowledge may be better able to recognise inappropriate behaviour, identify risk and seek help. Similar evidence indicates that improved sexual-abuse prevention knowledge can strengthen recognition of abusive situations and protective responses (Rusmayanti et al., 2024; Napitua and Rasmita, 2025). Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design prevents determination of temporal direction; prior experience of abuse could also influence adolescents' knowledge, awareness and reporting behaviour.

Strengths and limitations

The study provides local school-based evidence from both public and private co-educational schools and used multistage sampling to recruit 420 respondents. The use of logistic regression allowed assessment of adjusted associations between several socio-demographic and selected explanatory variables and reported sexual abuse. Several limitations should be considered. First, the cross-sectional design prevents causal inference and establishes associations rather than temporal relationships. Second, sexual abuse is sensitive and potentially stigmatised, so under-reporting and social desirability bias may have occurred despite confidentiality procedures. Third, the questionnaire in the source document contains some ambiguous or inconsistently worded items, including the wording of the item on sexual intercourse and some factor questions. Fourth, the source manuscript reports percentages for several abuse characteristics using the total sample as denominator; publication tables should retain these denominators explicitly to avoid misinterpretation. Finally, the study was limited to selected secondary schools in Okrika LGA, so findings may not be generalisable to all adolescents in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Sexual abuse was reported by 48.1% of surveyed senior secondary school students in Okrika Local Government Area. Although many respondents had heard about sexual abuse or received teaching on the subject, 71.2% had poor overall knowledge. Female sex, parental unemployment

and selected household characteristics were associated with higher odds of reported abuse, while older age, living with the father and good knowledge were associated with lower odds. The findings indicate a need for coordinated school, family, community and health-sector prevention and response strategies.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Ethics Committee, Rivers State University, according to the source manuscript. Informed consent was obtained from participants, and confidentiality and privacy procedures were implemented.

Funding

No funding was provided for this study

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest

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