

Prevalence of Adolescents' Heterosexual behaviours among Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the prevalence of adolescents' heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional research design. From the total population of 185,225 students, a sample size of 1,200 was utilized. The face and content validity were ascertained. Reliability was determined using split half method and a reliability coefficient of 0.77 was gotten. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null the null hypothesis were tested using chi-square statistics. The result of this study illustrated that the prevalence of heterosexual behaviours was 57.0% of which good proportion of them kissed opposite sex (63.3%), practiced sexual intercourse (62.1%), engaged in oral sex (76.0%) and anal sex with opposite sex (67.7%), engaged in masturbation (51.9%). Also, the result revealed that there was a significant relationship between age and prevalence of adolescents' heterosexual behaviours ($X^2=14.200$, $df= 7$, $p<.05$). Thus, the study recommended among other things that public health officials and Policy makers should initiate policy frameworks to regulate certain websites and the type of information that is made accessible to children and adolescents through the media networks; Parents should prioritize the health and social status of their children monitoring them and caution them against negative behaviours and pattern that may affect their reproductive well-being.

Introduction

An individual's emotions and desires are most likely to be at their highest during their adolescent years. When people hit puberty, their hormones change, which makes them more physically interested in sexual activities. however, it's up to each person to act on their interest. Adolescents' and adults' sexual tastes are very different, so it's not possible to say anything general about them. Some other things that count are having more than one sexual partner or not using birth control at all. Adolescents' heterosexual behaviour refers to having sexual relations with the opposite sex before age 18. This includes some deviant forms of sexual behaviours such as having sexual relations to get money, or having sexual relations while drunk

(Silas, 2013; Abels, & Blignaut, 2011). For adolescents and young adults who are sexually active, the World Health Organization opined that getting an STD is more likely than for people of any other age. What this means is that more STIs and teen pregnancies happen when people start having sexual relations earlier. Sawyer et al. (2012) asserted that adolescents who start having sexual contact early are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours, such as stealing, fighting, using drugs, and skipping school. Stephenson et al. (2014) asserted that the average age at which an adolescent has their first sexual experience is different for each society, group of friends, and family situation. It has been observed by Kar et al. (2015) and Omorodion et al. (2021) that oral and anal sex are the most common types of sexual behaviour among adolescents and that the number of adolescents who engage in them increases with age. This has caused ethics and policy arguments. Adolescents need extra care because the things they do with their sexual and physical health can have big effects on life in general. Thirteen percent of Nigerians are between the ages of 10 and 24, these age group comprises of adolescents and their needs changes a lot depending on their culture, age, class, gender, where they live, their family situation, and their income, among others. When it comes to sexual and reproductive health care, different groups may have very different needs. These things take place because their thoughts and bodies have changed in a way that makes them want and be open to sexual touch more. Due to changes that occur in the body of adolescents, it may be hard to keep up with sexual and reproductive health at this time.

Adolescents become sexually active and capable of having kids, but their sexual behaviours can have long-lasting effects on their lives. Girls who engage in sexual behaviours that aren't safe are more likely to have problems with their reproductive health. They may have to make hard decisions, like having children before they're ready or having an abortion. It has been shown that young girls learn more about sexuality from their male peers than from their female peers. Adolescents who are sexually active can get HIV/AIDS and other STDs. There may be problems for adolescents with STDs for the rest of their lives if they don't get the right support. Adolescents' heterosexual behaviour can get in the way of their schoolwork in many ways. Lanari et al. (2020) also found that adolescents who were sexually active were less likely to participate in school events. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) asserts that 80% of new HIV cases among adolescents and young people in sub-Saharan Africa are among adolescent girls 15 to 19 years old. When it comes to sexual partners and experiences, adolescents girls and young women are twice as likely as adolescents boys of the same age to be HIV positive. In Rivers state Nigeria, several cases of heterosexual outcomes and reproductive issues have been reported through mass media such as adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual abuse and violence among others were traceable to risky heterosexual behaviours exhibited among adolescents. Despite the extent of this misdemeanor, there were substantive strategies to reduce the existence of heterosexual behaviours. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the prevalence and determinants of adolescent heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the prevalence of adolescent heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. investigate the prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

- ascertain forms of heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
- ascertain the prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on their age.
- explore the prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on their class level.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

- There is no significant relationship between age and prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary students in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between class level and prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary students in Rivers State.

Methodology

Research Design: A descriptive cross-sectional research design was utilized in order to achieve the purpose of this study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all public senior secondary school students in the 2022/2023 academic year in Rivers State with a total of one hundred and eighty-five thousand, two hundred and twenty-five (185,225) students. The population of the public senior secondary students in each of the selected schools was gotten through the Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board and advocacy visit to the various schools.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

From the total population of 185,225 students, 400 sample size was generated using the Taro Yamane (1967) statistical formula. Thereafter, the sample size for the study was multiplied by three, representing the three senatorial districts. One thousand two hundred (1200) students were randomly selected from twelve (12) LGAs across the three (3) Senatorial Districts. For the composition of respondents, a non-proportionate stratified random sampling technique was utilized to sample equal (100) respondents from each of the sampled schools thereby arriving at 1200 respondents which was used for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: The data for this study were collected through the administration of a pre-designed, re-tested, semi-structured questionnaire to respondents. The structured questionnaire modified was divided into three sections. Section A consisted of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Section B comprised of “Yes or No” questions on prevalence/forms of adolescents’ heterosexual behavior.

Validation of the instrument: Split half method was used for the reliability of the validated instrument. The analysis revealed a reliability index of 0.77 for the prevalence of adolescents’ heterosexual behavior.

Method of Data Analysis: The data analysis method for the study was basically descriptive statistical analyses. The researcher cross-checked all the administered questionnaires one by one for the purpose of completeness and accuracy; serial number was assigned to each question for easy identification and accuracy. The data was computed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and Microsoft Excel.

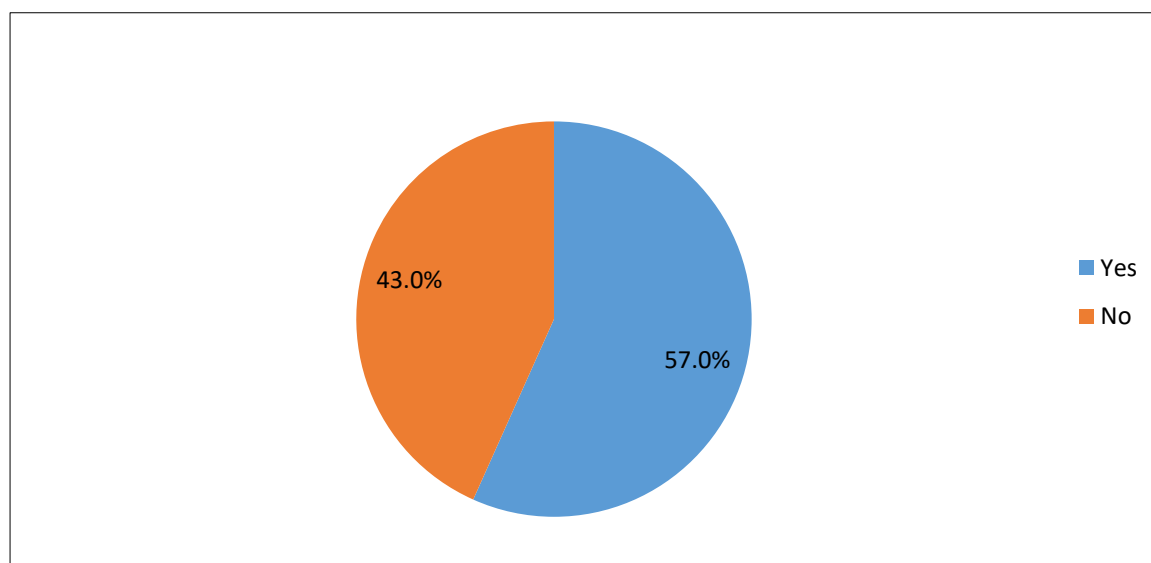
Results

What are the forms and prevalence of adolescent heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 1: Prevalence and types of heterosexual behaviour among adolescents: a frequency distribution (N = 1200).

S/N	Variables	No		Yes	
		F	%	F	%
1	Have you ever held hands with the opposite sex	192	16.0%	1008	84.0%
2	Have you ever practiced kissing with opposite sex?	440	36.7%	760	63.3%
3	Have you ever had sexual intercourse?	455	37.9%	745	62.1%
4	Have you ever engaged in oral sex?	288	24.0%	912	76.0%
5	Have you ever engaged in anal sex?	388	32.3%	812	67.7%
6	Have you ever engaged in masturbation?	577	48.1%	623	51.9%
7	Have you ever engaged in blow-job?	674	56.2%	526	43.8%
8	Have you ever engaged in fingering?	673	56.1%	527	43.9%
9	Have you ever engaged in cunnilingus?	793	66.1%	407	33.9%
10	Have you ever engaged in fellatio?	864	72.0%	336	28.0%
11	Have you ever experienced dry humping or genital rubbing?	341	28.4.0%	859	71.6%
AVERAGE		517	43.0%	683	57.0%

Source: Field survey (2023): Key: 0-25% = Low; 26-50% = Moderate; 51-100% = High



Key: 0-25% = Low; 26-50% = Moderate; 51-100% = High

Fig. 1: Prevalence of heterosexual behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State, broken down by gender.

The amount of heterosexual behaviour among adolescents in senior secondary schools in Rivers State is shown in Table 1 and Fig. 1. The people who took part were of the opposite sex, and they reported having oral sex (76.0%), anal sex (66.7%), sexual intercourse (62.1%), masturbation (51.9%), and blow-job.

Almost half (43.9%) of those who did cunnilingus (33.9%) and fellatio (28.0%) touched the other sex's breasts or other sensitive body parts. 71.6% of teens have dry humped, which is another important result. The chart makes it clear that 57% of the young people who were surveyed did activities that were not sexual. Because of this, there are a lot of straight seniors finishing from Rivers State. People who are sexually active may have problems with their physical and mental health, which has made some people worried.

Hypothesis 1: Among Rivers State's secondary school adolescents, there is no statistically significant correlation between age and the incidence of heterosexual behaviour.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis on significant relationship between Age and the prevalence of adolescents' heterosexual behaviours among senior secondary students in Rivers State

Variable			Prevalence		Test Statistics
	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Age	13	F	12	24	X ₂ (7) =14.200 P<.048
		%	1.0%	2.0%	
	14	F	45	63	
		%	3.8%	5.3%	
	15	F	77	91	
		%	6.4%	7.6%	
	16	F	141	171	
		%	11.8%	14.3%	
	17	F	58	110	
		%	4.8%	9.2%	
	18	F	100	104	
		%	8.3%	8.7%	
	19	F	76	116	
		%	6.3%	9.7%	
	20	F	8	4	
		%	0.7%	0.3%	

Table 2 displays the results of a chi-square test that looked at the link between age and the frequency of heterosexual behaviour among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The research found a strong link between age and the frequency of heterosexual practises among teens (X₂=14.200, df=7, p<.05). This means that the null hypothesis, which says there

isn't a significant link between age and the number of heterosexual acts among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, was thrown out.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of the association between academic major and the rate of heterosexual conduct among Nigerian high school seniors

Variable			Prevalence		Test Statistics
	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Class of Study	SS1	F	123	153	X ₂ (2)=0.783 P>.676
		%	10.3%	12.8%	
	SS2	F	157	223	
		%	13.1%	18.6%	
	SS3	F	237	307	
		%	19.8%	25.6%	

Table 3 displays the results of a chi-square study that looked at the link between Rivers State high school students and how often they behaved in a straight way. There was no link between high school students' focus on schoolwork and their reporting of heterosexual acts (X₂=0.783, df=2, p>.05). So, the null hypothesis, which says that there is no link between academic discipline and the number of times that heterosexual behaviour happens among high school students in Rivers State, was accepted.

Discussion

The result of this study in table 1 indicated that good proportion of adolescents (57.0%) engage in heterosexual behaviours such as having oral, vaginal sexual intercourse among others. It is pertinent that adolescent at this age of transition exposes them to rapid development and growth changes in the body system. The result of this study is in credence with studies of Palmer et al., (2019) which indicated that the prevalence of heterosexual intercourse was significantly high recording about 63.7% and good proportion of the result was traceable to adolescent below 18 years of age while age at first sexual debut was 22.4% and 36.2% for age 13-14 years. Lodz et al., (2019) affirmed that the prevalence of risky sexual behaviours among schools adolescents was 7.3% and age above 14 years was 31.7 times more likely to exhibit heterosexual behaviours such as multiple sexual partner and vaginal sex activities. Manjengwa et al., (2019) also buttressed that the prevalence of risky sexual behaviours was 13% and there was variation in the prevalence based on age and gender of adolescents especially among school children. It is plausible that adolescents experience physical and physiological changes that affect their behavior and their activities. As at the time of this study, there was no contrary findings against the outcome of the study. Hence, the prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among adolescent was significantly high.

The age at which adolescents begin sexual intercourse is of significant public health importance, as it has been found to expose them to potential risky outcomes both in the short and long term (Alawode et al., 2021; Akumiah et al., 2020). Studies in other contexts have equally identified that adolescents were engaging in sexual activities even before their 13th birthday (Akumiah, et al. 2020; Adongo, 2019; Durowade et al., 2017). This suggests that adolescents start having sexual relationships as early as 11 years, and therefore, parents, guardians, and health workers should start reproductive health education as early as possible, aimed at empowering children even before they turn 11 years. This also contributes to increasing teenage pregnancies, especially in Africa where about 14 million teenage pregnancies occur each year. It has also been estimated in sub-Saharan Africa that between

10% and 79% of all pregnancies in women below 20 years of age are described as unwanted (Worlds Health Organization, 2020). This suggests the need for youth empowerment on issues of reproductive health.

Outside of the home environment, the sexual behaviors of adolescents are greatly influenced by peers and the perceived benefits of engaging in sexual intercourse. Some adolescent believe that engaging in sexual activities increases their social status and respect among their peers and these perceived social benefits increases their chances of adapting sexual behaviors dictated by their peers (Forman-Alberti, 2015; Dewi, 2012). Adolescent who associate themselves with friends who are sexually experienced and frequently communicate about sex have a higher chance of engaging in sexual norms with the intention of reaping the benefits being told by friends (Widman et al., 2014). This might be suggestive why most of the respondents in our study who have had sex blamed it on peer influence. This points out to the fact that friends of adolescents should never be ignored when making attempts to promote reproductive health in the community.

Conclusion

In regard to the outcome of this study, it was concluded that the prevalence of heterosexual behaviours among adolescent was high and there was a variation in the prevalent rate based on age and gender of adolescent.

Recommendations

In regard to this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Advocacy and community mobilization should emphasize on adolescents heterosexual behaviours to increase awareness and discourage risky sexual behaviours.
2. Effective health education programs by school and health Agencies should target adolescents to improve knowledge on sexual issues, promote abstinence and motivate positive behaviours and minimize sexual risk.
3. Policy makers and curriculum planners should advocate for inclusion of sexuality education in basic and secondary school curriculum as a matter of priority to foster a positive attitude, knowledge and behavior of the adolescents towards sexuality.
4. Parents should prioritize the health and social status of their children monitoring them and caution them against negative behaviours and pattern that may affect their reproductive well-being.

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