

Knowledge of and Attitude Towards Risky Sexual Behaviour Among Adolescents in Selected Secondary Schools in Odeda, Ogun State

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Abstract:

Adolescent sexuality and reproductive health are important in order to combat increase in risky sexual activities and cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It has been observed that adolescents in secondary schools engaged in risky sexual behaviours which are pre-marital sex, multiple sex partners, transactional sex, teenage pregnancy, abortion and sex under influence of alcohol and hard drugs. The study was carried out to examine the knowledge of and attitude towards risky sexual behaviour among adolescent in selected secondary schools in Odeda, Ogun State. A descriptive cross-sectional design was used for this study. The population comprised 384 adolescents from selected secondary schools in Odeda local government, Ogun state. A semi-structured and self-administered questionnaire was validated and used to collect data. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that there was generally high level of good knowledge (60.5%) and practice (60.2%) of sexual behaviour among the respondents. Also, in terms of attitude, the respondents in this study had a positive view of it. A significant relationship existed between the level of knowledge and practice of risky sexual behaviour among the respondents ($p= 0.000$) and the attitude towards risky sexual behaviour among the respondents ($p= 0.002$).

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The study concluded that the adolescents in selected schools have adequate knowledge on risky sexual behaviour while their attitude towards risky sexual behaviour is also good. It was recommended among others that continuous awareness through sex education should be included in school-based teaching in order to have a total compliance on risky sexual behaviour.

Keywords: Adolescents, Attitude, Knowledge, Risky Sexual Behaviour,

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Introduction

Most of the risky sexual behaviours are seen frequently and sometimes practiced by adolescents. World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as persons between the age group of 10–19 years old while adolescence is the period of transmission from childhood to maturity and is characterized by spurt of physical, emotional, mental, social and psychosexual development (UNICEF, 2016). There are various types of risky sexual behaviour which include premarital sex, abortion and multiple sex partners among adolescents.

Adolescent pregnancy is a devastating problem in Nigeria. Studies have shown the prevalence of unintended pregnancy among adolescents was 23% in the west, 36% in the southwest and 26% in the North central part of the country (Urenna & Oluwatosin, 2016; Lamina, 2015). Multiple sex partners appear to be another risky sexual behaviour among teenagers. Studies have shown that transactional sex is rampant among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa (Choudhry, et al, 2015). Transactional sex means exchange of money or material gifts for sex.

One of the big influences on intention to perform certain behaviour is knowledge of the behaviour, which also affects the attitude towards the behaviour. It is vital to identify adolescents who have the intent to engage in risky sexual behaviour as they are likely to execute the actual behaviour if the external conditions are favourable. They can then be included in interventions to encourage safe sexual behaviour which can have positive effect on them. It is presumed that adolescents with good knowledge about sexually transmitted infection (STIs) and its prevention will not have the intent of engaging in risky sexual behaviour (Crocker, et al, 2019). Odeigah et al (2019) revealed that poor knowledge of the adolescent on high risk sexual practices has increased unselective sexual intercourse among youths of age 18 years and below and this made them believed that unprotected sex is safe.

According to Mkumbo (2013), attitude refers to an individual's disposition towards a particular conduct or behaviour. Attitude is considered to be an important factor which influences adolescents' behaviour. In Ogun state, it has been observed that adolescents in secondary schools engaged in risky sexual behaviours which are pre-marital sex, multiple sex partners, transactional sex, teenage pregnancy, abortion and sex under influence of alcohol and hard drugs. Majority of them are unaware of the consequences of their behaviour on their health which also affects the family, community and the nation. Due to consequences of risky sexual behaviour observed by the researchers among secondary school students from interacting with them, school authorities and their parents led to this study.

Thus, the study examined knowledge of and attitude towards risky sexual behaviour among adolescents in selected secondary schools in Odeda, Ogun State. This study specifically:

1. assessed the practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents;
2. assessed the level of knowledge of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents; and
3. determine the attitude of adolescents towards risky sexual behaviour

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following questions:

1. What is the risky sexual behavioural practice among adolescents?
2. What is the level of knowledge of adolescents on risky sexual behaviour?



3. What are the attitudes of adolescents towards risky sexual behaviour?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated for this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between level of knowledge and practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents
2. There is no significant relationship between the attitude and practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents.

Methodology

A descriptive cross sectional survey using semi-structured, self-administered questionnaires was employed in this study. The study was carried out among senior secondary school students in Odeda local government area of Ogun State, Southwestern Nigeria. Sample proportion for this study was calculated using Cochran's formula (1963). Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 384 students from Odeda local government area of Ogun state.

Quantitative method was used for data collection. This involved the use of self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed using information obtained from literatures on contents risky sexual behaviour, knowledge and attitude. In order to establish validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was presented to experts in the field of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health to determine the face and content validity of the instrument. The questionnaire to be employed for this study was pre-tested among forty (40) students of Asero high school, Abeokuta south Local government which is a similar population group. A Cronbach Alpha measurement of reliability co-efficient measure was carried out on the pre-tested questionnaire to know how reliable the instrument was. The results showed that the instrument tested among 40 students has a coefficient of 0.856. This shows that the instrument was reliable and appropriate for the study.

The collected data was checked for completeness and correctness. The data was compiled, coded and analysis using statistical package for social Sciences (SSPS) version 23. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage was calculated from the data. The results were presented using tables. Pearson Chi-Square was used to analyse the hypotheses of the study at the significance of 0.005 to identify the relationships.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the risky sexual behavioural practice among adolescents?

Table 1: Summary of the respondents' level of practices about risky sexual behaviour

Practice level	Category of scores	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Low	0-4	94	24.3%
Moderate	5-9	60	15.5%
Good	10-14	233	60.2%
Total		387	100

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Respondents were asked 14 practice questions to test them on their awareness of risky sexual behaviour practices. The awareness of the practice of respondents was shown by



giving a score of 1 to respondents who picked right answer to the statement and 0 to respondents who picked the wrong answer to the statements. The scores were categorized into the following:

Low practice - respondents who scored 0-4

Moderate practice-respondents who scored 5-9

Good knowledge- respondents who scored 10-14

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents had good level practice of risky sexual behaviour. 233 (60.2%) had good practice of risky sexual behaviour, 60 (15.5%) had a moderate practice of it while 94 (24.3%) of them had a low practice of risky sexual behaviour.

Research Question 2: What is the level of knowledge of adolescents on risky sexual behaviour?

Table 2: The summary of the respondents' level of awareness about risky sexual behaviour

Knowledge level	Category of scores	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Low	0-5	53	13.7%
Moderate	6-10	100	25.8%
Good	11-16	234	60.5%
Total		387	100

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Respondents were asked 16 knowledge questions to test them on their awareness of risky sexual behaviours. The knowledge of respondents was shown by giving a score of 1 to respondents who picked right answer to the knowledge statement and 0 to respondents who picked the wrong answer to the knowledge statements. The scores were categorized into the following:

Low knowledge - respondents who scored 0-5

Moderate knowledge-respondents who scored 6-10

Good knowledge- respondents who scored 11-16

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents had knowledge on risky sexual behaviour. 234 (60.5%) had good knowledge and awareness on risky sexual behaviour, 100 (25.8%) had moderate knowledge and awareness and 53 (13.7%) had a low knowledge about it.

Research Question 3: What are the attitudes of adolescents towards risky sexual behaviour?

Table 3: The summary of the respondents' attitude towards risky sexual behaviour

Attitude level	Category of scores	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Negative	0-4	85	22.0%
Positive	5-10	302	78.0%
Total		387	100

Source: *Field survey, 2021*

Respondents were asked 10 questions to assess their attitude towards risky sexual behaviour. The level of attitude of respondents was shown by giving a score of 1 to



respondents who had positive attitude to the statement and 0 to respondents who had negative attitude to the statements. The scores were categorized into the following:

Negative attitude- respondents who scored 0-4

Positive attitude -respondents who scored 5-10

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards risky sexual behaviour. 302 (78.0%) of them had a positive attitude towards risky sexual behaviour while 85 (22.0%) had a negative attitude towards it.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between level of knowledge and practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents

Table 4: The relationship between level of knowledge and practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents

	Value	Df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	39.477	4	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.914	4	
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.835	1	

The hypothesis testing in table 4 shows that the Chi-square (χ^2) value of 39.477 is significant at $p < 0.05$. The p-value of 0.000 was recorded for the hypothesis of respondents which is less than the alpha (α) p-value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This shows that there is significant relationship between the level of knowledge and practice of risky sexual behaviour among the respondents.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the attitude and practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents.

Table 5: Relationship between attitude and practice of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents

	Value	Df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	31.051	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	30.575	2	
Linear-by-Linear Association	28.026	1	

The hypothesis testing in table 5 shows that the Chi-square (χ^2) value of 31.051 is significant at $p < 0.05$. The p-value of 0.000 was recorded for the hypothesis of respondents which is less than the alpha (α) p-value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This shows that there is a significant relationship between the attitude of the respondents towards risky sexual behaviour and their practice of risky sexual behaviour. Also, there is a positive correlation between the knowledge and the attitude towards risky sexual behaviour (0.269).



Discussion

Majority of the respondents in this study have a good practice of risky sexual behaviour, however, some have reported cases of sexual behaviour which is similar to the work of Odimegwu and Somefun (2017). There were few of the respondents with negative practices towards risky sexual behaviour and this was similar to the reports of Agajie et al. (2015) and Girmay and Mariye (2019) where less than half of the respondents have engaged in risky sexual practices which could have occurred due to different reasons.

The findings of this study showed that the respondents have adequate knowledge on the risky sexual behaviours and this supports the report of Faimau et al. (2016) but it was however, in disagreement with the work of Odeigah et al. (2019) who reported a low level of knowledge in a study carried out in Ilorin. The findings of Newton-Levinson et al. (2016) that showed that inadequate knowledge of risky sexual behaviours was observed among the adolescents which does not align with the findings of this study and this predisposes them to unsafe sexual activities. The adequate knowledge of risky sexual practice among the respondents of this study might be due to the information source gaps, difference in educational background of the respondent's parents and socio demographic difference (Odeigah et al. 2019). The high level of knowledge in this study shows that the adolescents are aware of the risks and consequences associated with unsafe or risky sexual practice.

The findings of the study further revealed that 78.0% of the overall sampled students in this study was positive attitude towards risky sexual behaviour and this is similar to the study of Ena, Hurissa and Aliyu, (2016) where more than half (54.59%) of the respondents had positive attitude towards risky sexual behaviour that helped protect from the risk. Few of the participants had poor attitude towards risky sexual practices and this finding was not consistent with the work of Mojalantle et al. (2014). The good attitude towards sexual behaviour in this study can due to the fact that the sampled adolescents knew about the dangers of such practices and this is consistent with the report of Zhao et al. (2010).

The findings of the study also revealed that there was significant relationship between the level of knowledge and practice of risky sexual behaviour among the respondents and a similar finding was reported by Eggers et al. (2014) that that sexual knowledge influences risky sexual behaviour practice. Also, in this study, a significant relationship exists between the level of practice and attitude of the respondents towards risky sexual behaviour. This is consistent with the findings of Shadid and Wahan (2017) that participants with a negative attitude are more likely to practice risky sex. Bassy et al. (2005) reported a significant relationship between positive attitude and good sexual practice among secondary school girls in Calabar, Nigeria and this is consistent with the findings of this study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, majority of the respondents have Moderate knowledge and attitude about risky sexual behaviours. However, more focus should be placed on those with inadequate knowledge and practice.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:



1. Continuous awareness through sex education should be included in school-based teaching in order to have a total compliance on risky sexual behaviour.
2. Disciplinary measures should be taken to curb the excesses of adolescents engaging in risky sexual behaviour.
3. Parents and community leaders should engage and encourage the adolescents to continue having a positive view of sexual practices

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