



KNOWLEDGE OF NONCONSENSUAL SEX AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract: The study on knowledge of non-consensual sex among senior secondary school students in Rivers State was conceived due to the fact that secondary school students in Rivers State being within the age of development of secondary sexual characteristics have minimal knowledge of non-consensual sex. This study investigated the knowledge of non-consensual sex among senior secondary school students in Rivers State. One research question and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive cross sectional survey design. A sample of 1,600 senior secondary school students was selected for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure. The questionnaire titled “Knowledge on Non-consensual Sex instrument” was used for data collection which had reliability index of 0.85 via Kuder-Richardson 21 method and was validated by 5 experts in reproductive health, sex psychology, public health and statistics. Summation scores, ANOVA and z-test were used to analyse data. The findings of the study were that 59% (748) of the respondents had poor knowledge of non-consensual sex, there existed no significant difference in mean scores of students’ knowledge of non-consensual sex based on age ($p > 0.05$) at 2df, and that knowledge of non-consensual sex was not significant based on gender ($p < 0.05$) with the male having more knowledge of non-consensual sex than their female contemporaries.

Keywords: Knowledge, Non-consensual Sex, Students, Rivers State

Introduction

Non-consensual sex implies that the individual does not want, does not consent to such sexual advances by the perpetrators. Jejeebhoy (2005) defined non-consensual sex as sexual assault, threat, intimidation, unwanted touching and rape. Knowledge could be defined as what we know, which involves the mental processes of comprehension, understanding and learning (Wilson, 2002). The knowledge of non-consensual sex implies that the individual knows, is informed or is aware of the concept and how it is practiced. Aderemi and Pillay (2013) averred that non-consensual sex refers to what one knows concerning it. That is, what is known to be non-consensual sex or sex against the will of the individual, which they reported as being very low and lower among secondary school students and handicapped. The

Knowledge of non-consensual sex in the Nigerian societies seem to be very much limited to the actual penile penetration forcefully by a male on a female, normally referred to as rape, neglecting other forms of such experiences amidst the dire consequences they pose on the composure and wellbeing of their victims.

The knowledge of secondary school students concerning non-consensual sex seems to be limited to rape. An interaction with students in Rivers state reveals that they have experienced most of the forms of non-consensual sex but seem not to know that such experiences are actually non-consensual, hence, the reason for people with such experiences not reporting the perpetrators of such obnoxious acts. At the secondary school, most students begin to develop secondary sexual characteristics and become attractive to their cronies and some unscrupulous adults like neighbours and



teachers who are supposed to be their mentors. These adults now become perpetrators of the act of non-consensual sex to these students, male and female alike, using different technicalities and strategies against the will of the victims. Facts indicate that these victims are shackled in ignorance about what actually constitutes non-consensual sex activities and can in very futile manner pursue other options. However, the teaching and learning process affords a little awareness on sex education but does not explain in detail what constitutes non-consensual sex and actions to be taken when students are faced with such ugly situations or experiences. This present study x-rayed what students in the study area know concerning non-consensual sex which could be a stepping stone to devising measures for improvement of such knowledge if it is low and strategies to discourage perpetrators of the act. The knowledge one has about a concept has a very strong inclination on the individual's attitude towards the phenomena and automatically affects his approach to it.

Knowledge of Non-Consensual Sex

An overview of studies on non-consensual sex, sexual coercion, sexual harassment and unwanted sex shows that little or nothing has been said about knowledge of non-consensual sex especially among secondary school students' world over to the best of the knowledge of the researcher. Imaledo et al (2012) reported that students of the University of Port Harcourt had good knowledge of non-consensual sex including unwanted touching of the breast. Some students hold the erroneous opinion that non-consensual sex is part of relationship and that female students have more knowledge of non-consensual sex compared to their male counterparts. In a related study report by Ajuwon et al (2006), that students' knowledge on non-consensual sex is low and that the female students have higher levels of knowledge of reproductive health matters including non-consensual sex compared to their male contemporaries. In a related development, studies by Erulkar (2004) in Kenya has it that the rate of involvement or experiences of non-consensual sex by females was reported to be 10 times higher than that in males, and that the knowledge level of females far outweighs that of the males with regards to non-consensual sex. Similarly, Rositch, Hudgens, Backes (2012) reported that sexual debut for females occurs 1.5 years – 2 years earlier compared to the males, that those who had experienced non-consensual sex commence consensual sexual relationship 2 years earlier than their counterparts. However, the knowledge of what

constitute non-consensual sex was also very low (3 0%) among the population under study.

Contrary to the report above, Jewkes et al (2002) reported that 60% of males had non-consensual sex compared to 40% females in Cape Town, and that males have higher knowledge of non-consensual sex compared to the female counterparts; Hence, the commencement of non-consensual sex before the females. A report by Ramakrishna et al (2005) reveals that the knowledge of non-consensual sex, transactional sex is very high among boys and girls in Bangalore, India. The study reported that girls as young as age eight are already initiated into sexual activities most times against their will but lack the power to say no, amidst the problems of poverty and basic amenities. The study further reported that younger boys were knowledgeable of the concept (Maja) pleasure obtained from anal sex by older boys who force them and make them submit for anal sex to enable them get maja. Ajuwon et al (2006) reported that adolescents in Nigeria have unmet reproductive health needs which is evident in the fact that some adolescents and other young ones lack adequate knowledge and understanding of reproductive process such as; HIV cannot infect them, use of condom is a waste of time, participating in group sex or (gang rape), early sexual debut are not known to many adolescents. Male and female in Ibadan have experienced non-consensual sex ranging from rape, attempted rape and others and that occurrence of non-consensual sex is common, hence adolescents are knowledgeable of its existence but lack the effrontery to complain when they experience such. This could be due to victim blaming in this part of the world. Agardth et al (2011) reported that knowledge of sexual coercion is on the increase world over and that in many parts of the world sexual coercion has been linked to risky sexual behaviour, implying that there may be a common causal pathway in the psychological reaction to the serious violation of an individual's integrity.

Aderemi and Pillay (2013) reported that people with disability have very poor knowledge on reproductive health and unwanted sexual activities are high among them since they lack the capacity to resist attempts and in most cases they are about 95% unable to complain such attempts at them. They further documented that 15% of the world population are made of disabled persons. In view of the poor knowledge of reproductive health, adolescents that are disabled are at risk of HIV infection and that youth with disabilities among the poorest are most marginalized of all people.



They face barriers that preclude them from accessing basic services, including HIV/AIDS and reproductive health services (Aisha, Diamini, Groce, & Wire, 2004)

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school students in Rivers State have been engaging in non-consensual sex but may have minimal or limited knowledge on such experiences as being non-consensual. When an individual, like the student experiences non-consensual sex, they are likely to suffer from inability to socialize, inferiority complex, depression and consequent inability to learn due to flash backs, obsessions and fear of perpetrators if they are within. This research work sort to investigate the knowledge of non-consensual sex among senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

- (i) What is the non-consensual sex knowledge of senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
- (ii) What are the difference in knowledge of non-consensual sex among senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on age?
- (iii) What are the difference in knowledge of non-consensual sex among senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on gender?

Research Hypotheses

- (i) There is no significant difference in non-consensual sex knowledge of senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on age.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in non-consensual sex of senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on gender.

Significance of the Study

This study findings are of great benefit to curriculum planners, counselling psychologists in schools, the mass media, students at all levels, researchers in reproductive health among others.

Methodology

Study Design

This study adopted the descriptive cross sectional survey research design.

Population for the Study

The study population consisted all the secondary school students in Rivers State at the senior secondary level which number

118,903 as at the time of the study (2016), Post Primary School Board, Rivers State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study consisted 1,600 senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in the study which was made of stratification based on senatorial district, simple random sampling for each district, proportional stratified and simple random sampling to select the required students from each of the selected classes in the school selected for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The questionnaire titled “Knowledge of Non-consensual Sex” was used to collect data. It was made of section A: socio-demographic characteristics and B: emphasized knowledge of non-consensual sex based questions.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by five experts in statistics, reproductive health education and psychology.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested using Kuder Richardson 21. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained from result of administration to a group of students from a school not selected for the study.

Method of Data Collection

Copies of the self-administered questionnaires were given to respondents by the researcher and 3 other trained research assistants.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the non-consensual sex knowledge scores of secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 1: Range of Scores on Senior Secondary School Students’ Knowledge of Nonconsensual Sex

Range of Scores	n	%	Remarks
10-29	941	59	Poor knowledge
30-50	694	41	Good knowledge

Table 1 shows that 694(41%) of the students with the scores ranging from 30 to 50 had good knowledge of the non-consensual



sex, while 941(59%) of the students who scored between 10 and 29 had poor knowledge of non-consensual sex.

Null hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the non-consensual sex knowledge scores of senior secondary school students in Rivers State based on their gender.

Table 2: ANOVA on the Mean Scores of Secondary School Students on Their Knowledge of Nonconsensual Sex Based on their Age

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	Cal.F	Crit.F	P	Remark
Between groups	530.389	2	265.194				
Within groups	144000.071	1592	90.452	2.93	3.00	NS	0.054
Total	144530.460	1594					

Table 2 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance 2df numerator and 1592df denominator, the calculated F 2.93 is less than the critical F of 3.00, ($p \geq 0.05$) the first null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Then there is significant difference in the mean scores of secondary school students' knowledge of non-consensual sex based on their age.

Table 3: Z-test on the Mean Scores of Secondary School Students on their Knowledge of Non-consensual Sex Based on Gender

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	Cal.Z	Crit.Z	P	Remark
Male	800	29.29	8.39					
Female	785	25.82	10.22	1593	7.84	1.96	0.00	S

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 1593df calculated z 7.84 is greater than the critical z 1.96, ($p < 0.05$), the second null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Then, there is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students' nonconsensual sex knowledge with male having more knowledge than the female students.

Discussions

Non-consensual Sex knowledge of Secondary School Students in Rivers State

The findings of the study indicated that greater number of the students 941(59%) out of 1595 had poor knowledge of non-consensual sex. Hence, the result means that a large proportion of secondary school students in Rivers state do not know what constitutes non-consensual sex. Poor knowledge of non-consensual sex among the students is surprising, in spite of the recent jingles and the inclusion of sex and HIV/AIDS education in schools. Several factors may have contributed to such poor knowledge among the students, some of the reasons could be the inability of parents to discuss matters of sex, specifically, non-consensual sex with their wards, the lack of teachers (well trained) for HIV/AIDS sex education in schools who would be better

equipped to teach the subject matter. Another reason for poor knowledge of non-consensual sex among students could be attributed to staunch religious affiliation that bans people from discussing or talking about sex matters at all settings.

The findings of this present study are in agreement with some past findings, such as Ajuwon et al (2006) who reported that secondary school students in Nigeria have unmet reproductive health needs which is evident in their lack of knowledge on reproductive process including sexual coercion, HIV/AIDS and condom use. Rositch et al (2012) in their study on Adolescents in India revealed that the knowledge of what constitute non-consensual sex was as low as 30% among the population under study. Similar results were obtained by World Bank and Aderemi (2013), WHO (2011) and Grace (2004).



The finding of this study are at variance with study findings by Imaledo et al (2012) who studied knowledge, perception and experiences of non-consensual sex among students in Port Harcourt metropolis, who reported that majority of the students have good knowledge of non-consensual sex with a mean score of 2.9 ± 1.7 . Peter-Kio (2013) also reported that the knowledge of secondary school students in some sub-urban areas of Rivers State have higher knowledge of non-consensual sex of above 50%. Similarly, Erulkar (2004) in his study of sexual coercion knowledge of secondary school students in Kenya, reported that female students' knowledge score was ten times higher than their male counterparts and that overall knowledge of the respondents on sexual coercion was 60%. Agardth (2011) also reported higher knowledge concerning non-consensual sex of more than 60% among students in Uganda.

The results dissimilar to the findings of the present study could be as a result of the time of the study. Virtually all studies with high knowledge of non-consensual sex were those conducted in years between 2011 and 2014. There may have occurred a spontaneous decline due to relapse in awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS, unwanted sex and other sexually transmitted disease. Another reason for the difference in the result could be attributed to the method of analysis employed by other researchers. While most of the result with high knowledge of non-consensual sex did not make use of statistical reports in reporting but simply said either high or low based on simple percentages, whereas the present study made use of summated scores, and rated them in relation to the acceptable norm.

Non-Consensual Sex Knowledge Based on Age

The result of the study indicates that students irrespective of their age have poor knowledge of the non-consensual sex. However, students aged between 18 and 21 years have poorer knowledge of non-consensual sex and that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of secondary school students' knowledge of non-consensual sex based on their age. The result shows that secondary school students in Rivers State have poor knowledge concerning non-consensual sex matters irrespective of their age. Whether young (10-13) or older 18-21 the poor knowledge runs constant among them. The result further means that secondary school students in Rivers State do not know that unwanted kissing, touching, threats/intimidation, forced sex among others constitute non-consensual sex. The above situation could be due

to the fact that the government law reinforcement agencies and individuals alike have always treated such matters with levity.

The findings of this study are in agreement with studies by Imaledo et al (2012) who submitted that students Aged 10-years and above had low knowledge on non-consensual sex in Port Harcourt metropolis. Aciemo (1999) also agrees with this research finding in his report that secondary school students knowledge decrease with increase in age, specifically those below the age of 14 years, were more knowledgeable compared to the ones above that age in terms of non-consensual sex.

The findings of this study are at variance with the findings of Ajuwon et al (2006) who reported that girls and boys above age 15 years of age had higher knowledge of reproductive health especially sexual coercion in their study report in North Eastern part of Nigeria. Reports by the Guttmacher Institute (2007) in Rukai, Uganda has it that non-consensual sex such as rape and others forms was high and students 15 years and above had good knowledge concerning non-consensual sex. Ajuwon (2011) further disagrees with the findings of this study when he reported high knowledge and age at sexual debut to be 16 years for both male and female students in Ibadan, Nigeria. Similar results were gotten by Vikran et al (2001) who submitted that knowledge of non-consensual sex and age at sexual debut was high and age 16 as debut age for both male and female students in Goa India. Peter-Kio (2013) also disagrees with the findings of this study when she reported debut age to be 16 years and that secondary school students in the study area had high knowledge of non-consensual sex. The dissimilarities between these results and that of the present study could be due to the fact that students may have not answered truthfully due to the societal shackling of matter of sexuality in secrecy. Another reason for the difference in the result could be due to the fact that virtually all the studies reviewed did not explore appropriate statistical tools for the analysis of the research report.

Non-consensual Sex Knowledge Based on Gender

The result of the study indicates that both male and female students have poor knowledge of the non-consensual sex. However, female students have poorer knowledge of non-consensual sex than the males and that, there exists significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students' non-consensual sex knowledge with male having more knowledge than the female students. The above result means that gender



(being a male or female) is a strong determinant in non-consensual sex knowledge of secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, male secondary school students are more knowledgeable concerning non-consensual sex in Rivers even if over all, knowledge of non-consensual sex in Rivers State remains low. The result that gender is a significant factor to the advantage of the male students in Rivers State is very surprising because one will expect that a female should be more knowledgeable owing to the fact that the development of secondary sexual characteristics starts about 2 years in the female before their male counterparts. Perhaps the difference in knowledge between male and their female counterpart could be as a result of male chauvinism. A situation where males are to be honoured, allowed to do anything they so will, some other reason for the difference could be attributed to religious factors, ordinarily one sees more females in orthodox, protestants and Pentecostal religious grounds about five times more than the males.

The findings of this study are in concordance with the findings of Jewkes (2001) who reported that males had a knowledge score of 60% of non-consensual sex in Cape Town. Similar results were obtained by Ramakrishna et al (2000). Hence, they submitted that non-consensual sex knowledge was very high among boys than girls in Bangalore India. Ajuwon et al (2011) also reported that males were more knowledgeable than females (52% against 48%) among secondary school students in Ibadan Nigeria. Contrary to these findings were the findings of Erulka (2004) who reported that females were ten times more experienced than male students due to better knowledge they have concerning non-consensual sex in Nyerere, Kenya. Ajuwon et al (2006) reported that girls and boys aged 15 years and above had higher knowledge of reproductive health in Northern Eastern part of Nigeria. This goes further to mean that there exists no difference in knowledge of non-consensual sex with respect to the gender of secondary school students in the study area. Similar result was obtained by Carlos, Babara and Hudes (2007) in their studies of students in Lima. The findings of this study further contradict that of Imaledo et al (2012) who reported that female students in the University of Port Harcourt were more knowledgeable than their male contemporaries in issues of non-consensual sex. Dissimilarity between these findings and that of the present study could be due to the fact that some of the researchers concentrated on out of school adolescent, higher school students and the analysis

techniques adopted by some of them differed. Other reasons could be adduced to smallness of the sample size and the timing of study, that is, when the study was carried out.

Conclusion

Knowledge of non-consensual sex among secondary school students in the study area remains poor and such poor knowledge persists irrespective of age and gender. Thus, effort should be put in place to make students improve on their knowledge of non-consensual sex which will significantly affect experiences, perception and their attitude towards non-consensual sex.

Recommendations

1. Health awareness campaigns should be intensified at all levels ranging from the school by teachers, mass media featuring health educators to improve on the knowledge of the entire populace concerning non-consensual sex.
2. The health education curriculum should be reviewed to painstakingly emphasize non-consensual sex behaviours, techniques, forms and how to prevent their occurrence.
3. The laws enshrined in the constitution concerning non-consensual sex should be made public to all and sundry by way of picking experts from it and posted at strategic locations in public places such as the schools, the banks and the hospitals in order to improve knowledge of what constitutes non-consensual sex.
4. Enforcing the extant laws concerning non-consensual sex and making such punishment public in the mass media

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