

2nd International Conference on

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

December 03-04, 2018 Toronto, Canada

The uptake of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services among adolescent girls and young women in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Background & Aim: Low uptake of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services amongst adolescent girls and young women have created a heavy burden in the tackling of associated health issues. This ranges from unsafe sex, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), unplanned pregnancy, unsafe abortion and early marriage amongst this population. This study aims at assessing the knowledge, experience and exposure of adolescent girls and young women on sexual education, condom use and Gender-based Violence (GBV), which results in their poor uptake of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services.

Method: An online study comprising of 88 adolescent girls and young women, age 10-24 of different ethnic background and religion was conducted from the 25th of February to the 7th of April 2018, in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Nigeria has a total population of (170 million) people with adolescent girls and young women (age 10-24) constituting 31.4% of the country's population. Early exposure and/or high sexual risk amongst Adolescents and Young Persons (AYPs) age 15-24 is seen at 16% for females and 6% for males who had sexual debut before 15 years, but there is a decline for males from 17 years to 15 years. Condom use during the first sexual intercourse among sexually active adolescents and young persons' age 15-24 years is seen at 22% for young men and 11% for young women. Gender-based violence amongst adolescent girls and young women is seen at 29.4% for age 15-19 years and 31.6% for 20-24 years. A mixed method approach was employed for this study, involving the use of self-administered online questionnaires to elicit information on sexual education, condom use and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Data collected was analyzed by Google and presented graphically, in percentages.

Result: Sexual Education: 48.9% of the respondents got their first knowledge about menstrual cycle from their parent, while 35.2% from school, 18.2% from peer group and 5.7% by self-discovery. 83% of the respondents know how to track their menstrual cycle, while 17% do not. Only 37.5% of respondents have knowledge of their safe period, while 62.5% do not have knowledge of their safe period. Condom: 76.1% of respondents have heard of female condom, while 23.9% of respondents have not. Of the 76.1% that have heard of female condom, 40% got their knowledge from peer group, 38.5% from school, 27.7% from social media, 1.5% from parent and 1.5% from religious groups. 51.1% of respondents have seen female condom, while 48.9% have not. Of the respondents that have seen a female condom, 53.5% saw it at the health facility/pharmacy, 27.9% saw it with friends, 16.3% saw it in school and 4.7% at home. All the respondents have never used a female condom. Gender-Based Violence: 94.3% of respondents have heard of GBV, while 5.7% have not. 15.9% of respondents are victims of GBV, while 84.1% have never had such experience. Of all the victims, 76.9% did nothing, 15.4% reported to the police/authorities and 7.7% reported to their parent/guardian. Of all the victims that did nothing was 71.4% because they did not know what to do, 14.3% were threatened and 14.3% were scared of stigma.

Conclusion: Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are services we must provide to adolescent girls and young women in order to mitigate unsafe sex, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), pregnancy, unsafe abortion and early marriage among this target populations. Low uptake of these services is creating more burden rather than solution to the health of these adolescent girls and young women. This in turn burdens the health sector, not just in Kaduna state of their communities, but Nigeria and the world. It is therefore paramount that efforts aimed at addressing these gaps and challenges are made, sooner than later, as it will greatly impact on the quality of SRHR services and its outcome.

Biography

Haruna Aaron Sunday has completed his Biology and Computer Science National Certificate of Education (NCE) from Federal College of Education Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. He is the West Africa Board Representative for Africa Young Positive Network (AY+). He is also the Founder of African Network of Adolescents and Young Persons Development and Kaduna State Coordinator of Adolescents and Young Persons Living with HIV for Association of Positive Youth Living with HIV in Nigeria. He is also the Ambassador for the UNICEF Nigeria All in to end Adolescents AIDS.

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