Knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting High Risk Sex among Unmarried Youths in Nigeria

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Abstract : This study assesses the levels of knowledge of sexually transmitted infections among unmarried youths in Nigeria; examines the pattern of high risk sex among unmarried youths in Nigeria; investigate the socio-demographic factors (age, place of residence, religion, level of education, wealth index and employment status) affecting the practice of high-risk sexual behaviour and ascertain the relationships between knowledge of sexually transmitted infections and practice of high risk sex. The goal of the study is to identify the factors associated with the practice of high risk sex among youth. These were with a view to identifying critical actions needed to reduce high risk sexual behaviour among youths. The study employed secondary data. The data for the study were extracted from the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). The 2013 NDHS collected information from 38,948 Women ages 15-49 years and 17,359 men ages 15-49. A total of 7,744 female and 6,027 male respondents were utilized in the study. In order to adjust for the effect of oversampling of the population, the weighting factor provided by Measure DHS was applied. The data were analysed using frequency distribution and logistic regression. The results show that both male (92.2%) and female (93.6%) have accurate knowledge of sexually transmitted infections. The study also revealed that prevalence of high risk sexual behavior is high among Nigerian youths; this is evident as 77.7% (female) and 78.4% (male) are engaging in high risk sexual behavior. The bivariate analysis shows that age of respondent ($\chi2=294.2$; $p < 0.05$), religion ($\chi2=136.64$; $p < 0.05$), wealth index ($\chi2=17.38$; $p < 0.05$), level of education ($\chi2=34.73$; $p < 0.05$) and employment status ($\chi2=94.54$; $p < 0.05$) were individual factors significantly associated with high risk sexual behaviour among male while age of respondent ($\chi2=327.07$; $p < 0.05$), place of residence ($\chi2=6.71$; $p < 0.05$), religion ($\chi2=81.04$; $p < 0.05$), wealth index ($\chi2=7.41$; $p < 0.05$), level of education ($\chi2=18.12$; $p < 0.05$) and employment status ($\chi2=51.02$; $p < 0.05$) were individual factors significantly associated with high risk sexual behaviour among female. Furthermore, the study shows that there is a relationship between knowledge of sexually transmitted infections and high risk sex among male ($\chi2=38.32$; $p < 0.05$) and female ($\chi2=18.37$; $p < 0.05$). At multivariate level, the study revealed that individual characteristics such as age, religion, place of residence, wealth index, levels of education and employment status were statistically significantly related with high risk sexual behaviour among male and female ($p < 0.05$). Lastly, the study shows that knowledge of sexually transmitted infection was significantly related to high risk sexual behaviour among youths ($p < 0.05$). The study concludes that there is a high level of knowledge of sexually transmitted infections among unmarried youths in Nigeria. The practice of high risk sex is high among unmarried youths but higher among male youths. The prevalence of high risk sexual activity is higher for males when they are at disadvantage and higher for females when they are at advantage. Socio-demographic factors like age of respondents, religion, wealth index, place of residence, employment status and highest level of education are factors influencing high risk sexual behaviour among youths.

Keywords : high risk sex, wealth index, sexual behaviour, knowledge