

Spatial Analysis of the Perception of Family Planning among Teenage Mothers in Nigeria

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Abstract : Teenage pregnancy is a major health concern because of its association with high morbidity and mortality for both mother and child. In 2013, 23% of women in Nigeria, aged 15 - 19 yr have begun childbearing: 17% have had a child and 5% are pregnant with their first child. Reported differences across locations have been attributed to factors such as educational attainment and exposure to mass media. This study therefore seeks to determine the difference in the level of exposure among teenage mothers and older women of reproductive age in Nigeria. Over 12,000 women of reproductive age (18 - 49 yr) were interviewed across 8 states from the Northern and Southern region of Nigeria. The women were further segregated into two groups of 0 (women aged 18 - 20 yr who had children of their own) and 1 (women of reproductive age excluding teenage mothers). Data was collected via structured questionnaires on mobile devices using the open data kit platform. Initial data formatting and recoding was done using STATA 13 package. Initial analysis was also conducted using SPSS version 21 and the data points were mapped on QuantumGIS package. From the results of analyzed data obtained from the studied states, there were various mean ages of first births across the supported states. Though Akwa Ibom had one of the oldest mean ages (21.2 yr) at first birth and the lowest fertility rate of 3.9 births/woman according to the National Demographic Health Survey 2013, Akwa Ibom had the highest rate of teenage pregnancy (18.2%) across the respondents. Based on education, the respondents that had completed secondary school education (56.9%) made up the greatest cohorts of the teenage parents. This is counter indicative of the initial thinking that there is an inverse relationship between level of education and teenage pregnancy. Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Delta states are states where respondents felt that contraceptive use is dangerous to health and they were the top 4 states that had a large proportion of teenage mothers. Similarly, across the states examined, all the women of reproductive age felt they could convince their spouses to use contraceptives, as using family planning does not cause women to be promiscuous. This study thus reveals that across the states studied, there was no marked variation in the perception of family planning between teenage parents and women of reproductive age. The study also highlights the need for future planning and exposure to family planning messages at secondary school level.

Keywords : adolescent, family planning, mass media, teenage mothers

Conference Title : ICMGPH 2018 : International Conference on Medical Geography and Public Health

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 10-11, 2018