

Knowledge, Attitude, and Willingness to Utilize the Treatment and Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Adolescents in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Understanding awareness of and attitude towards STDs is essential in designing strategies that can be used to achieve reduction of the prevalence. Adolescents, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, represent a high-risk group due to their behavioral patterns, evolving sexual autonomy, and limited access to accurate sexual health information and services

Methodology: Study design: a descriptive cross-sectional study which will be conducted among adolescent students of government secondary schools. Study area: Karu LGA, Keffi LGA, Nasarawa State. Sampling technique: a multi-stage sampling techniques was adopted. Stage 1: selection of local government areas (LGAs). Stage 2: selection of schools. Stage 3: selection of students within the school. Stage 4: selection of respondents. Study population: adolescent students within the adolescent age range (10-19 years). Data collection: data would be collected using a properly structured, self-administered questionnaire. Data management analysis: using SPSS, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, chi square tests will be conducted to determine associations between categorical variables.

Results: The respondents' age ranged between 11 and 19 years, with a mean age of 14.4 years (std = 1.8). The age distribution of respondents revealed a diverse range across the different age groups. The highest representation was observed in the 14-16 age group, constituting 61.6% of the total respondents. The knowledge section revealed that the vast majority of participants (86.3%) demonstrated good knowledge of STDs, particularly recognizing HIV/AIDS (99.5%) and gonorrhoea (98.6%) as common STDs. Findings about attitudes towards STDs were mixed as some respondents' (69.4%) acknowledged STDs as a serious health issue, a significant proportion felt embarrassed discussing STDs (73.2%) or expressed stigma towards affected persons. Willingness to use prevention and treatment services was high, with 96.4% respondents willing to attend a clinic for std testing, and 97.9% respondents were also eager to learn more about prevention.

Conclusion: The study reveals the need for tailored health education that considers cultural and gender dynamics, addresses stigma, and promotes positive sexual health attitudes to improve outcomes among adolescents.

Recommendation: It is recommended to implant cultural sensitive sexual health education programs in school to help curb misinformation and help in promoting positive attitude towards STD treatment and prevention. Expansion of youth friendly health services: confidential, stigma free std testing and treatment should be done at various clinics with trained health workers to deliver respectful, non-judgmental care towards adolescents.

