

Determinants of Adolescent Reproductive Health Problems in Awka South Local Government Area South East Nigeria: Implication for Counselling (pp. 61-67)

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Abstract

The study tried to find out the determinants of adolescent reproductive health problems in Awka South Local Government Area of Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Four research questions guided the study. A total of two hundred and fourteen adolescent who attended antenatal clinic from January – June 2007 were used for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The descriptive statistics of mean was use to analyze the data with a criterion mean at 2.50. The result revealed that sexual transmitted diseases, hypertensive diseases, hemorrhage, and anaemia were determinants of reproductive health problems among adolescents. Based on the findings, the researchers made some recommendations and counselling implications.

Introduction

Adolescence is the period in the developmental stage of a human being when an individual is faced with the problem of shading of the relatively comfortable role of a child for that of a reasonable adult (Berger, 1991). It is a transition stage, a difficult stage and a delicate stage that needs to be handled with caution by both adolescent and all those who have influence over him especially the parents. Kennedy (1996) sees adolescence as a time

when great physical, educational and social changes take place in a person. In the case of girls, it is also the time when some of them are given out for marriage. WHO (1999) and WHO & UNICEF (1996) observe that pregnancy among adolescents is a growing health concern in many African countries. WHO (1995) observes that adolescents have complications related pregnancy and childbirth and are among the leading causes of mortality of age (15 – 22 years) in many parts of the developing world.

According to Moronkola (1996) Adolescents maternal health status of a country affects the nation health status and the entire population. Makinson (1985), Senderowitz and Paxman (1985) and Geronimus (1987) observe that early pregnancies have also been associated with higher than risk of morbidity during child birth and high incidences of maternal and prenatal deaths. This is because child bearing has been associated with many social and health risks that are sometimes very serious, and therefore, need targeting from both the curative and preventive health strategies.

Okonkwo (2004) associates teenage pregnancy as lack of adequate sex education. Traditionally, sex education has consisted of parents explaining the facts of human reproduction to children reaching the age of adolescence. In Nigeria, pregnancy related deaths and disabilities are therefore increasingly being seen as a measure of neglect of the basic needs and rights of women. The maternal morbidity and mortality of the adolescents include pregnancy related problems like sexual transmitted diseases, anaemia, and hypertension (Kuti, 1990). Many pregnant women who do not die go through one health problem or the other (Peterson, 2001). Therefore, determinants of adolescent reproductive health problems may help to guard women from having these problems. The researchers carried this research work because this type of study had not been carried out in Awka South Local Government hence the need for the present study.

Research Question

1. Would sexual transmitted diseases be a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problems in Awka south Local Government Area?
2. Would hypertensive disease in pregnancy be a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?

3. Would hemorrhage be a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?
4. Would anaemia be a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?

Methods

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all adolescent pregnant women in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State Nigeria. The towns include Awka, Nibo, Amawbia, Umuawulu, Mbaukwu, Isiagu and Nise. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two towns. Also, simple random sampling was used to select two antenatal clinics from Awka and Amawbia town. The sample for the study were 214 adolescent women who attended antenatal clinic from January to June 2007. Four research questions guided the study. Structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for the study. The questionnaire has two sections. Section A has the personal data place of residence, age of mother, and marital status. Section B consists of the items of the questionnaire of 4 point rating viz. Strongly Agreed – 4, Agreed – 3; Disagree – 2 and Strongly Disagree – 1, used to collect data for the study. The instrument had a test – retest reliability of 0.74.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. A criterion mean of 2.50 was established for the study. Mean scores of 2.50 and above are considered to be determinants of adolescents' reproductive health problem.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

Would sexual transmitted diseases be a determinant of adolescent reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table 1 shows that the mean score for item was 2.97 which is greater than criterion mean of 2.50. The data revealed that sexual transmitted disease is a determinant of adolescent reproductive health problem among adolescent women in Awka South Local Government Area of Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with Kuti (1990) who observed that maternal morbidity and mortality of the adolescents include pregnancy related problems like sexual transmitted diseases, anaemia and hypertension. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) form another major potential consequence of unprotected sexual activity during adolescence.

Research Question 2

Would hypertensive disease of pregnancy be a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?

Data in table 2 shows that the mean score for the item is 2.82 showing a positive response to the statement. The mean score is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This showed that hypertensive disease of pregnancy is a determinant of adolescent reproductive health problem among adolescent in Awka south Local Government Area of Nigeria. This corroborates with the findings of Maine (1991) that in most cases high blood pressure, protein in the urine, if left untreated can cause the death of the patient.

Research Question 3

Would hemorrhage be a determinant adolescent reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table 3 showed that the mean score for the item was 2.84 and this is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This data revealed a positive response to the statement that hemorrhage is a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problem among adolescent women in Awka South Local Government Area of Nigeria. Supporting this Brute (2003) noted that hemorrhage is a serious health problem, cannot live for two hours unless she receives treatment.

Research Question 4

Would anaemia be a determinant of adolescent reproductive health problem in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table 4 shows that the mean score for item was 2.95 which is greater than criterion mean of 2.50. The data revealed positive response to the statement, that anaemia is a determinant of adolescent Reproductive health problem in Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with Kennedy (1996) and Harlow (1993) asserted that anaemia is mainly caused by nutritional deficiency of iron and folic acid. They also noted that other causes include sickness from malaria, sickle cell, bacterial infection, blood loss and intestinal parasites. Anaemia may result from poverty which prevent mothers from obtaining good diet during pregnancy and may lead to serious health problem.

Conclusion and Implications for Counselling

Based on the findings, it was observed that adolescents in Awka South Local Government Area perceived, sexual transmitted diseases, hypertensive diseases, hemorrhage and anaemia as determinants of adolescent

Reproductive health problem. These are the major reproductive health problems facing adolescent in Awka South Local Government Area in Nigeria. Guidance counsellors in Nigerian schools should start early to introduce family life education, preferably, in primary schools, with a view to making the adolescents understand more about their bodies. Emphasis should be made on the quality of care by ensuring that there are enough trained counsellors in Nigeria primary, secondary schools and antenatal clinics. The researchers made some recommendations include:

1. Government should train more counsellors and post them to various antenatal clinics for care.
2. Enlightening the adolescents on the importance of utilization of health care services.
3. The government and other NGOs should encourage the use of prenatal services and provide them free to mothers. Emphasis should be on the quality of care by ensuring that there are enough trained human resources, basic facilities and drugs for safe delivery.
4. Guidance programmes should be made available by counsellors for proper assistance to adolescents on sex education.

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Table 1: Weighted Responses on Sexual Transmitted Diseases as a Determinant of Adolescent Reproductive Health Problem

Response	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean (\bar{x})
Frequency	84 (336)	61 (183)	49 (98)	20 (20)	214	2.97
Percentage	39.2%	28.5%	22.8%	9.34%	100%	

Table 2: Weighted Responses on Hypertensive Disease of Pregnancy as a Determinant of Adolescent Reproductive Health Problem

Response	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean (\bar{x})
Frequency	68 (272)	81 (243)	24 (48)	41 (41)	214	2.82
Percentage	31.7%	(37.8%)	(11.2%)	(19.1%)	100%	

Table 3: Weighted Responses on Hemorrhage as a Determinant of Adolescent Reproductive Health Problem

Response	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean (\bar{x})
Frequency	73 (292)	69 (207)	38 (76)	34 (34)	214	2.84
Percentage	34.1%	32.2%	17.7%	15.8%	100%	

Table 4: Weighted Responses on Anaemia as a Determinant of Adolescent Reproductive Health Problem

Response	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean (\bar{x})
Frequency	86 (344)	65 (195)	32 (64)	30 (30)	214	2.95
Percentage	40.1%	30.3%	14.9%	14.0%	100%	