Assessment of adolescents sexual behaviour as risk factor for HIV infection among in-school adolescents in Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background

HIV/AIDS infection amongst adolescents in sub-Sahara Africa countries including Nigeria has attracted global attention and several studies have identified sexual risk behaviour as the major risk factor enhancing the transmission of HIV infection.

Rationale

The increasing cases of HIV infections amongst adolescents are worrisome, and the thus need to assess adolescents’ sexual behaviour in order to identify the pattern and prevalence of risky sexual behaviours (RSBs) that can put them at the risk of contracting HIV infection and make recommendations to relevant stakeholders in addressing identified problems.

Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional study design conducted in Ondo State Nigeria to assess sexual behaviour as a risk factor for HIV infection among in-school adolescents. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select consented 400 in-school adolescents aged 15-19years and data collected with the aid of pretested, structured; self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage distribution were used to show the distribution of the study sample according to selected study variables, statistical testing was done using Chi-square at the 0.05 level of significance.

Result

The study revealed that the major prevalent risky sexual behaviours among adolescents include early sexual debut, premarital sex, unprotected sexual intercourse and multiple sexual partner. Sexual activity rate was 28.7%, mean age of sexual debut15.7+7years, 38% of which was due to coercion (rape). 40.6% engaged in sex with multiple partners and the prevalence of unprotected sex is 62.6%. The majority (38%) uses condom prevent unwanted pregnancy rather than HIV and STIs.

Male gender is significant determinant of adolescents sexual behaviour, others include advancing age and class of respondents, polygamous family setup and single status. These determinants need to be modified to reduce the risk contracting HIV infection.

Respondents have good (59.0%) level of knowledge of HIV basic facts, prevention and cure, and good (67.0%) level of knowledge of the mode of transmission, and high (73.5%) level of basic knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. There is a significant association between the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS and prevalence of risky sexual behaviours amongst adolescents at 0.05 level of significant.

Conclusion

High risky sexual behaviours in the form of early sexual debut, premarital sex, multiple sexual partners and unprotected sexual intercourse among the adolescents are risk of contracting HIV infection. All relevant stakeholders are recommended to promote specific intervention programmes that will enhance adolescents’ knowledge of HIV and behavioural change in addressing the risk of HIV infection.