

The Prevalence and Pattern of Risky Sexual Behaviour Among Secondary School Adolescents in Yenagoa Local Government Area.

ABSTRACT

Aim: To determine the prevalence, pattern and socio-demographic factors associated with risky sexual behaviour (RSB) among adolescents in secondary schools in Yenagoa LGA, Bayelsa state.

Study Design: A cross-sectional analytical study

Place and duration: Yenagoa Local Government Area in Bayelsa state. The study was conducted in March/April 2021.

Methodology: The study utilized self-administered questionnaires among 750 secondary school adolescents selected via multistage sampling. The proportion of adolescents with RSB and the socio-demographic determinants of RSB were analysed using Chi-square test and binary logistic regression with significance level set at $p\text{-value}=0.05$.

Results: Of the 739 responses analysed, the prevalence of RSB was 156 (21.1%) and the mean age at sexual debut was 13.42 ± 2.62 years. All sexually exposed adolescents had an early sexual debut, 23.7% had multiple sexual partners, and 98.1% reported inconsistent use of condoms. Transactional sex and sexual intercourse after alcohol/illicit drug use occurred in 56.4% and 15.4% of them, respectively. The predictors of RSB were attending a public school (AOR:2.046, 95%CI:1.243 to 3.368), peer pressure (AOR:10.451, 95%CI:6.460 to 16.909), difficulty in communicating with mother (AOR:2.050, 95%CI:1.203 to 3.493) and low maternal education (primary:AOR:2.834, 95%CI:1.300 to 6.181; and secondary: AOR:2.067,

95%CI:1.139 to 3.753). However, age below 18years (10-13years: AOR:0.194, 95%CI:0.051 to 0.741 and 14-17years: AOR:0.259, 95% CI:0.081 to 0.832) was protective of RSB.

Conclusion: RSB is high among adolescents attending secondary schools in Yenagoa. Sex education, peer-based programmes and parent-adolescent communications should be encouraged to reduce the prevalence of RSB among adolescents.

Keywords: [risky, sexual, behaviour, adolescents,]

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, a transitional stage of development spanning the ages of 10 to 19 years, is characterized by physical, cognitive and mental changes.¹ The adolescent often demonstrates increasing sexual curiosity and awareness.² This, alongside a desire to sexually experiment, leads to involvement in risky sexual behaviour (RSB), defined as sexual activities that predispose one to contract sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, and having unwanted pregnancies.^{2,3} Several patterns of risky sexual behaviour that have been identified include early sexual debut, unprotected sexual intercourse, multiple sexual partnerships, transactional sex, and sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs.^{4,5,6} Over the last few decades, with the early onset of puberty and late marriages due to a quest for formal education, adolescents are becoming more involved in premarital sex, often without caution which is a precursor for both unintended pregnancy and STIs.⁷ Early sexual debut is associated with a more than twofold increase in the risk for subsequent risky sexual behaviour.⁸ Young people face barriers to assessing contraception which include laws and policies that restrict access based on age or marital status, health workers' bias, unwillingness to acknowledge adolescents' sexual health needs and their inability to obtain contraceptives such as lack of knowledge and finance.⁷ Many sexually active adolescents also lack self-esteem and are unable to assert themselves or negotiate safe sexual practices with their partners.⁷

Many teenagers in Bayelsa are already sexually exposed and engage in RSB.⁹ The median age for first sexual intercourse in Bayelsa is 16.3 years, the earliest among all the states in the south-south region of the country and many have begun sex by 10 to 11years of age.^{9,10} The high level of poverty among the inhabitants of Yenagoa that coexist with the massive wealth displayed by politicians and oil workers who are in the habit of enticing young women with their money, worsens the situation.¹¹ Bayelsa state has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Southern Nigeria.⁹ This is especially worrisome as many of the unmarried pregnant females opt for criminal abortion and a few who are unable or unwilling to procure abortion go on to deliver their babies with resultant negative effects on their education, health and future economic power.¹¹ This not only causes untold hardship for the adolescent and her family but activates a vicious cycle of poverty for her, the child and the society at large.

This study aimed to provide relevant information on the burden and drivers of risky sexual behaviour in adolescents which is needed for advocacy and policy-making in their sexual and reproductive health.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study area and design: This study was a school-based, cross-sectional analytical study conducted between March and April 2022 among secondary school adolescents (10 to 19 years) in Yenagoa Local Government Area (LGA), the capital of Bayelsa State. It is located in the South-South region of Nigeria with a land area of 1,698km and an estimated population of 470,800 (2016 projection from 2006 census).¹² The people speak mainly Ijaw language and English and most of them are civil servants, traders, and subsistent farmers and fishermen.¹² The adolescent population in Bayelsa state was 403,844 (from 2006 census).^{11,4} The 2020 adolescent population projection from the 2006 census at an annual growth rate of 3% is 614,635.

2.2 Sample size: Using Fischer's formula for cross-sectional study design and a 10% non-response, a minimum sample size of 735 students was obtained which was approximated to 750. Eligible students were recruited for the study via multistage random sampling.

2.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Adolescents attending secondary schools in Yenagoa LGA who gave assent and whose parents/guardians gave consent. Adolescents absent from school on the day of data collection were excluded.

2.4 Study instrument: The study instrument (questionnaire) used for data collection in this study was developed and adapted from the illustrative questionnaire for interview surveys with young people designed by John Cleland for WHO.¹³

2.5 Measurement Variables: Adolescents were considered to have RSB if they engaged in at least one of the following: sexual intercourse before the age of 18 years (early sexual debut), multiple sexual partnerships defined as having more than one sexual partner at any time in the past before the survey, inconsistent use of condom which is failure to use a condom during sexual intercourse at any time in the past before the survey, transactional sex, or sexual intercourse after the use of drugs or alcohol.

2.6 Data analysis: Data was analysed using SPSS version 26 software. Categorical data were presented as frequencies and percentages, while continuous data were summarized using appropriate measures of central tendencies (mean or median) and variability (standard deviation or range). Adolescents who engaged in one or more of the highlighted sexual activities were considered as having RSB and constituted the prevalence of risky sexual behaviour among the study population. The proportion of adolescents engaged in each of the sexual activities represented the pattern of RSB. The relationship between the socio-demographic and environmental factors and RSB among adolescents was explored using the Chi-square test. Socio-demographic factors that were associated with adolescents' involvement in risky sexual behaviour were identified using binary logistic regression analysis with level of significance set at P value < 0.05.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Seven hundred and fifty questionnaires were administered however, 739 were filled giving a response rate of 98.5%. Respondents ranged from 10 to 19 years with a mean age of 14.08 ± 1.86 years. Females constituted 56.3% of the population and the modal class was senior secondary class 2 (SS 2) as shown in Table 1. There was an almost equal distribution of respondents in public (49.3%) and private (50.7%) schools. Most of the respondents were Christians (98.1%). Four hundred and twenty-eight respondents (57.9%) belonged to the richest wealth quintile as determined by the household wealth index. Also, a large percentage of respondents (60.2%) belonged to high socio-economic class.

Table I. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

| Variables | Frequency (n=739) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Age category | | |
| 10-13 years(early adolescence) | 283 | 38.3 |
| 14- 17 years(mid-adolescence) | 437 | 59.1 |
| 18-19yrs(late adolescence) | 19 | 2.6 |
| Sex | | |
| Female | 416 | 56.3 |
| Male | 323 | 43.7 |
| Class | | |

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----|------|
| JSS 1 | 99 | 13.4 |
| JSS 2 | 114 | 15.4 |
| JSS 3 | 116 | 15.7 |
| SSS 1 | 140 | 18.9 |
| SSS 2 | 144 | 19.5 |
| SSS 3 | 126 | 17.1 |
| School type | | |
| Public | 364 | 49.3 |
| Private | 375 | 50.7 |
| School composition | | |
| Co-educational | 689 | 93.2 |
| Same sex | 50 | 6.8 |
| Religion | | |
| Christainity | 725 | 98.1 |
| Islam | 9 | 1.2 |
| Others | 5 | 0.7 |
| Wealth index | | |
| Richest | 428 | 57.9 |
| Richer | 194 | 26.3 |
| Middle | 94 | 12.7 |
| Poorer | 20 | 2.7 |
| Poorest | 3 | 0.4 |

3.2 Family structure and bond: The majority of the respondent's parents were married (76.5%) as shown in Table II. Many of the respondents (71.3%) lived in the same household with both parents,. More than half of the respondents (58%) found it easy to talk with their fathers however, only about 10% could often discuss sex-related issues with their fathers. On the other hand, 83.4% of the respondents could communicate easily with their mothers and 24.2% of them could often speak with their mothers about issues related to sex as reflected in Table II.

Table II: Family structure and bond

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| Marital status of parents | | |
| Married | 565 | 76.5 |
| single/divorced | 174 | 23.5 |
| Living with parents | | |
| Both parents | 527 | 71.3 |
| One parent | 160 | 21.7 |
| Neither parent | 52 | 7.0 |
| Ease of talking with father | | |
| Very easy | 224 | 30.3 |
| Easy | 205 | 27.7 |
| Difficult | 193 | 26.1 |
| Very difficult | 81 | 11.0 |
| Not at all | 36 | 4.9 |
| Frequency of discussing sex-related issues with father | | |
| Often | 75 | 10.1 |
| Occasionally | 107 | 14.5 |
| Never | 557 | 75.4 |
| Ease of talking with mother | | |
| Very easy | 410 | 55.5 |
| Easy | 206 | 27.9 |
| Difficult | 68 | 9.2 |
| Very difficult | 37 | 5.0 |
| Not at all | 18 | 2.4 |
| Frequency of discussing sex-related issues with mother | | |
| Often | 179 | 24.2 |
| Occasionally | 190 | 25.7 |

3.3 Prevalence and Pattern of Risky Sexual Behaviour

The prevalence of RSB among the respondents was 21.1%. All one hundred and fifty-six sexually exposed respondents (100%) had an early sexual debut, 153 (98.1%) reported inconsistent use of condoms / unprotected sexual intercourse and 88 (56.4%) engaged in transactional sex. Also, multiple sexual partnerships and sexual intercourse after the use of alcohol/drugs were noted in 37 (23.7%) and 24 (15.4%) of the sexually exposed respondents respectively as shown in Table III. Except for sex after the use of alcohol/illicit drugs, the various patterns of RSB were more prevalent in males however this was only statistically significant for multiple sexual partnerships.

Table III: Association between pattern of risky sexual behaviour and gender

| Pattern of RSB | Yes n (%) | No n (%) | Total n (%) | P-value | χ^2 |
|----------------|---|-------------|----------------|---------|----------|
| Gender | Early sexual debut | | | | |
| Male | 72 (22.3) | 251 (77.7) | 323 (100.0) | 0.488 | 0.481 |
| female | 84 (20.2) | 332 (79.8) | 416 (100.0) | | |
| Total | 156 (21.1) | 583 (78.9) | 739 (100.0) | | |
| | Unprotected sex/inconsistent condom use | | | | |
| Male | 70 (21.7) | 253 (78.3) | 323 (100.0) | 0.584 | 0.328 |
| Female | 83 (20.0) | 333 (80.0) | 416 (100.0) | | |
| Total | 153 (20.7) | 586 (79.3) | 739 (100.0) | | |
| | Transactional sex | | | | |
| Male | 38 (43.2) | 285 (56.8) | 323 (100.0) | 0.916 | 0.011 |
| Female | 50 (12.0) | 366 (88.0) | 416 (100.0) | | |
| Total | 88 (11.9) | 651 (88.1) | 739 (100.0) | | |
| | Multiple sexual partnership | | | | |
| Male | 23 (7.1) | 300 (92.9) | 323 (100.0) | 0.020* | 5.391 |
| Female | 14 (3.4) | 402 (96.6) | 416 (100.0) | | |
| Total | 37 (5.0) | 702 (95) | 739 (100.0) | | |
| | Sex after use of illicit drug/alcohol | | | | |
| Male | 10 (3.1) | 313 (96.9) | 323 (100.0) | 0.838 | 0.420 |
| Female | 14 (3.4) | 402 (96.6) | 416 (100.0) | | |
| Total | 24 (3.2) | 715 (96.8) | 739 (100.0) | | |

*statistically significant.

3.4. Mean age at sexual debut and gender.

The mean and modal ages at sexual debut were 13.42 \pm 2.62 years and 15 years respectively. Also, the mean ages at sexual debut for males and females were 13.64yrs \pm 2.43 and 13.24yrs \pm 2.77 respectively as seen in the table and the difference was not statistically significant as seen in table IV.

Table IV: Association between mean age at sexual debut and gender

| Variables | Male N=72(%) | Female N=84(%) | Total N=156 | T | P-value | 95% CI |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------|---------|--------------|
| Mean age at sexual debut | 13.64 \pm 2.77 | 13.24 \pm 2.77 | 13.42 \pm 2.62 | 0.954 | 0.342 | -0.429-1.231 |
| Median (range) at | 14.00 (5.00- | 14.00 (5.00- | 14.00 (5.00- | | | |

3.5. Factors associated with risky sexual behaviour among respondents

3.5.1 Association between socio-demographic factors and RSB

The association between socio-demographic factors and RSB is shown in Table V. Most of the respondents who practiced RSB were in their late adolescence (63.2%) while the early adolescence group had the least number (13.1%) and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.001$). Also, the class with the highest number of respondents who engaged in RSB were SS2 (27.8%), followed by SS3 (27.0%) and the least was the JS 3 class (13.8%). This difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.04$). A larger number of students who had RSB were in public schools (28.3%) compared to private schools (14.1%) and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.001$). Similarly, co-educational schools had more respondents who engaged in RSB (22.1%) than same-sex schools (8.0%) and this was statistically significant ($P = 0.019$).

The majority of the respondents who had RSB had poor religious attendance with RSB being highest among those that attended religious activities once monthly (56.3%), followed by once yearly and never at 33.3% each. RSB was least among those who attended religious activity once weekly (18.7%), and this difference was statistically significant. Also, RSB was significantly higher among respondents who engaged in RSB due to perceived pressure to have sex. ($P < 0.001$).

Table V: Association between socio-demographic characteristics and RSB.

| Variables | RSB present n (%) | RSB absent n (%) | Total n (%) | χ^2 | P-value | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Age category | | | | | | | |
| 10-13yrs (early adolescence) | 37 (13.1) | 246 (86.9) | 283 (100.0) | 30.885 ^a | 0.000* | | |
| 14-17yrs (mid adolescence) | 107 (24.5) | 330 (75.5) | 437 (100.0) | | | | |
| 18-19yrs (late adolescence) | 12 (63.2) | 7 (36.8) | 19 (100.0) | | | | |
| Sex | | | | | | | |
| Male | 72 (22.3) | 251 (77.7) | 323 (100.0) | 0.481 | 0.488 | | |
| Female | 84 (20.2) | 332 (79.8) | 416 (100.0) | | | | |
| Class | | | | | | | |
| JSS 1 | 20 (20.2) | 79 (79.8) | 99 (100.0) | 11.645 | 0.040* | | |
| JSS 2 | 20 (17.5) | 94 (82.4) | 114 (100.0) | | | | |
| JSS 3 | 16 (13.8) | 100 (86.2) | 116 (100.0) | | | | |
| SSS 1 | 26 (18.6) | 114 (81.4) | 140 (100.0) | | | | |
| SSS 2 | 40 (27.8) | 104 (72.2) | 144 (100.0) | | | | |
| SSS 3 | 34 (27.0) | 92 (73.0) | 126 (100.0) | | | | |
| School type | | | | | | | |
| Public | 103 (28.3) | 261 (71.7) | 364 (100.0) | | | 22.249 | 0.000* |
| Private | 53 (14.1) | 322 (85.9) | 375 (100.0) | | | | |
| School composition | | | | | | | |
| Co educational | 152 (22.1) | 537 (77.9) | 689 (100.0) | 5.534 ^a | 0.019* | | |
| Same sex | 4 (8.0) | 46 (92.0) | 50 (100.0) | | | | |
| Religion | | | | | | | |
| Christainity | 152 (21.0) | 573 (79.0) | 725 (100.0) | 1.212 ^a | 0.577 | | |
| Islam | 3 (33.3) | 6 (66.7) | 9 (100.0) | | | | |
| Others | 1 (20.0) | 4 (80.0) | 5 (100.0) | | | | |
| Religious attendance | | | | | | | |
| Everyday | 70 (21.7) | 253 (78.3) | 323 (100.0) | 13.199 ^a | 0.007* | | |
| Once weekly | 72 (18.7) | 313 (81.3) | 385 (100.0) | | | | |
| Once monthly | 9 (56.3) | 7 (43.8) | 16 (100.0) | | | | |
| Once yearly | 1 (33.3) | 2 (66.7) | 3 (100.0) | | | | |
| Never | 4 (33.3) | 8 (66.7) | 12 (100.0) | | | | |
| Pressure to have sex | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 82 (62.1) | 50 (37.9) | 132 (100.0) | 162.308 | 0.000* | | |
| No | 74 (12.1) | 533 (87.9) | 607 (100.0) | | | | |

*statistically significant. a- Fisher's Exact used for expected cell count <5

3.5.2 Association between Parental level of education/socioeconomic status and RSB

Table VI shows the association between parental level of education/socioeconomic status and RSB at the bivariate level. The statistically significant factors include maternal and paternal levels of education, socioeconomic class and wealth quintiles

Table VI: Association between Parental level of education/socioeconomic status and RSB

| Variables | RSB present n(%) | RSB absent n(%) | Total n(%) | χ^2 | p-value |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------|
| Level of education of mother | | | | | |
| No formal education | 17(26.6) | 47(73.4) | 64(100.0) | 24.015 | 0.000* |
| Primary | 31(33.0) | 63(67.0) | 94(100.0) | | |
| Secondary | 81(23.6) | 262(76.4) | 343(100.0) | | |
| Tertiary | 27(11.3) | 211(88.7) | 238(100.0) | | |
| Level of education of father | | | | | |
| No formal education | 19(26.8) | 52(73.2) | 71(100.0) | 9.878 | 0.020* |
| Primary | 33(28.9) | 81(71.1) | 114(100.0) | | |
| Secondary | 56(21.7) | 202(78.3) | 258(100.0) | | |
| Tertiary | 48(16.2) | 248(83.8) | 296(100.0) | | |
| Socioeconomic class | | | | | |
| High | 84 (18.9) | 361 (81.1) | 445 (100.0) | 9.437 | 0.009* |
| Middle | 45 (29.1) | 170 (79.1) | 215 (100.0) | | |
| Low | 27 (34.2) | 52 (65.8) | 79 (100.0) | | |
| Wealth index | | | | | |
| Richest | 76 (17.8) | 352 (82.2) | 428 (100.0) | 13.394 ^a | 0.007* |
| Richer | 41 (21.1) | 153 (78.9) | 194 (100.0) | | |
| Middle | 31(33.0) | 63 (67.0) | 94 (100.0) | | |
| Poorer | 7 (35.0) | 13 (65.0) | 20 (100.0) | | |
| Poorest | 1 (33.3) | 2 (66.7) | 3 (100.0) | | |

*statistically significant, a- Fisher's Exact used for expected cell count <5

3.5.3. Association between family dynamics and RSB among respondents

Table VII depicts the association between family dynamics and RSB among respondents. Living with parents and communication with mother were statistically significant determinants of RSB among respondents at the bivariate level.

Table VII: Association between family dynamics and RSB among respondents

| Variables | RSB present n (%) | RSB absent n (%) | Total n(%) | χ^2 | p-value |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------|---------|
| Marital status of parents | | | | | |
| Currently married | | | | 4.760 | 0.34 |
| Currently unmarried | 109 (19.3) | 456 (80.7) | 565 (100.0) | | |
| | 47 (27.0) | 127 (73.0) | 174 (100.0) | | |

Living with parents

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|-------------|---------|--------|
| Both parents | 97 (18.4) | 430 (81.6) | 527 (100.0) | 11.2001 | 0.004* |
| One parent | 40 (25.0) | 120 (75.0) | 160 (100.0) | | |
| Neither parent | 19 (36.5) | 33 (63.5) | 52 (100.0) | | |

Communication with father

Very easy

Easy 53 (23.7) 171 (76.3) 224 (100.0) 7.759 0.101

Difficult 33 (16.1) 172 (83.9) 205 (100.0)

Very difficult 38 (19.7) 155 (80.3) 193 (100.0)

We don't talk 24 (29.6) 57 (70.4) 81 (100.0)

8 (22.2) 28 (77.8) 36 (100.0)

Discussing sex-related matters with father

Often 20 (26.7) 55 (73.3) 75 (100.0) 2.184 0.336

Occasionally 25 (23.4) 82 (76.6) 107 (100.0)

Never 111 (19.9) 446 (80.1) 557 (100.0)

Communication with mother

Very easy 71 (17.3) 339 (82.7) 410 (100.0) 32.936 0.000*

Easy 42 (20.4) 164 (79.6) 206 (100.0)

Difficult 17 (25.0) 51 (75.0) 68 (100.0)

Very difficult 21 (56.8) 16 (43.2) 37 (100.0)

We don't talk 5 (27.8) 13 (72.2) 18 (100.0)

Discussing sex-related matters with mother

Often 34 (19.0) 145 (81.0) 179 (100.0) 5.801 0.055

Occasionally

| | | | |
|-------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 31 (16.3) | 159 (83.7) | 190 (100.0) |
| | 91 (24.6) | 279 (75.4) | 370 (100.0) |

- * statistically significant

3.6. Multivariate analysis

The result of multivariate analysis is shown in Table VIII. Analysis of variables that were statistically significant at the bivariate level showed that respondents within the age categories of 10-13 years and 14-17 years, school type (public or private), mother's educational level, and communication with mother were significant determinants of RSB among respondents. Class of respondent, school composition (mixed or same-sex), attendance to religious activities, father's level of education, marital status of parents, whether the respondent lived with parents and wealth index were no longer significant.

Respondents within the age groups of 10-13 years were less likely to indulge in RSB than those within 18- 19 years of age (AOR= 0.194, p-value 0.017) as shown in Table VIII. Likewise, those within the 14-17 years age category were less likely to practice RSB than those in the 18- 19 years age group (AOR=0.259, p-value 0.023). The odds of occurrence of RSB in adolescent students in public schools was twice that of private schools (AOR=2.046, p-value 0.005).

Adolescents whose mothers had only primary level of education were almost 3 times more likely to practice RSB than those with a tertiary level of education (AOR=2.834, p-value 0.009). Similarly, adolescents whose mothers had a secondary level of education were twice as likely to indulge in RSB as those whose mothers have tertiary education (AOR=2.067, p-value 0.017). The odds of RSB in adolescents who had difficulty communicating with their mothers was twice that of adolescents who had easy communication with their mothers (AOR=2.050, p=0.008), and adolescents who felt pressured by their peers and romantic partners to engage in sexual intercourse were 10 times more likely to practice RSB than those who did not experience any form of pressure (AOR=10.451, p-value 0.000).

Table VIII: Multivariate analysis of factors associated with risky sexual behaviour

| Variables (reference category) ^R | Coefficient B | Adjusted odds ratio (AOR) | p-value | 95% CI Lower to upper limit |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Age category (18-19yrs)^R | | | | |
| 10-13yrs | -1.642 | 0.194 | 0.017* | 0.051- 0.741 |
| 14-17yrs | -1.350 | 0.259 | 0.023* | 0.081-0.832 |
| Class category (SSS 3)^R | | | | |
| JSS 1 | -0.041 | 0.960 | 0.931 | 0.377-2.444 |
| JSS 2 | 0.220 | 1.247 | 0.632 | 0.505-3.075 |
| JSS 3 | -0.387 | 0.679 | 0.372 | 0.290-1.588 |
| SSS 1 | -0.027 | 0.973 | 0.941 | 0.471-2.009 |
| SSS 2 | 0.213 | 1.237 | 0.523 | 0.644-2.378 |
| School type (Private)^R | | | | |
| Public | 0.716 | 2.046 | 0.005* | 1.243-3.368 |
| School composition (Mixed)^R | | | | |
| Same sex | -1.074 | 0.342 | 0.083 | 0.101-1.152 |
| Religious attendance (Never)^R | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Always/Sometimes | 0.069 | 1.071 | 0.939 | 0.186-6.170 |
| Level of education of mother | | | | |
| (tertiary education)^R | | | | |
| No formal education | 0.485 | 1.625 | 0.286 | 0.666-3.964 |
| Primary | 1.042 | 2.834 | 0.009* | 1.300-6.181 |
| Secondary | 0.726 | 2.067 | 0.017* | 1.139-3.753 |
| Level of education of father | | | | |
| (Tertiary education)^R | | | | |
| No formal education | 0.031 | 1.032 | 0.943 | 0.442- 2.408 |
| Primary | 0.265 | 1.304 | 0.433 | 0.672- 2.530 |
| Secondary | -0.224 | 0.799 | 0.427 | 0.459- 1.390 |
| Marital status of parents | | | | |
| (separated/divorced)^R | | | | |
| Currently married | -0.308 | 0.735 | 0.321 | 0.400- 1.350 |
| Living with parents | | | | |
| (Both parent)^R | | | | |
| With one parent | 0.486 | 1.626 | 0.115 | 0.888-2.977 |
| With neither parent | 0.700 | 2.013 | 0.104 | 0.866-4.682 |
| Talking with mother (Easy)^R | | | | |
| Difficult | 0.718 | 2.050 | 0.008* | 1.203-3.493 |
| Peer pressure (No)^R | | | | |
| Yes | 2.347 | 10.451 | 0.000* | 6.460-16.909 |
| Wealth index (richest)^R | | | | |
| Poorest | 1.258 | 3.519 | 0.372 | 0.223-55.641 |
| Poorer | 0.200 | 1.221 | 0.738 | 0.379-3.937 |
| Middle | 0.356 | 1.428 | 0.297 | 0.731-2.791 |
| Rich | -0.700 | 0.625 | 0.094 | 0.361-1.083 |

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- * statistically significant. R-reference variable

4. Discussion

The prevalence of RSB from this study is comparable to findings in Osun state, Nigeria (19.2%) and Aksum, Ethiopia (19.6%).^{14,15} It is however higher than findings in Ibadan, Nigeria (14%) and North Schewa, Ethiopia (11.4%).^{16,17} These variations are most likely due to differences in defining criteria for RSB and the population studied.

All sexually exposed adolescents in this study had an early sexual debut which is similar to findings by an Ethiopian study, however another Ethiopian study noted a much lower prevalence of 33.3%.^{15,17} The difference in findings can be attributed to a difference in the population sampled; this study like the former studied all adolescents in secondary schools while the latter restricted its study population to younger adolescents in the junior secondary grades, and sexual exposure is known to increase with age.¹⁷ Early sexual debut was commoner in females than in males in this study. This was similarly reported by the Nigerian National Health Survey and a study in Ethiopia.^{9,18} This may be because of the desire of many females for material things which lures them into sex with older men.¹⁸

The high prevalence of unprotected sexual intercourse/ inconsistent use of condom in this study is similar to that reported by in Sierra Leone.¹⁹ However, this is higher than a national prevalence of 63.3–76.7% among unmarried young people using three National Demographic Health Surveys (2008, 2013 and 2018) conducted in Nigeria.²⁰ This is most likely due to differences in definition criteria for inconsistent condom use and the sampled population. It is worth noting that there was an observable increase in the practice of inconsistent condoms across the three surveys with the least in 2008 and the highest in 2018 and the high prevalence in this study may be a reflection of this worrisome trend. This could be the result of an increasing number of teenagers initiating sex earlier in life but lacking the skills, confidence and understanding necessary to practice safe sex.^{7,21}

The prevalence of multiple sexual partnerships in this study is comparable to findings in Ethiopia but lower than findings in Rivers state, Nigeria.^{15,22} More than half of the sexually exposed respondents practiced transactional sex and this is higher than the reported prevalence in similar studies in Ibadan and Bayelsa, Nigeria.^{16,23} This may be attributed to the defining criteria for transactional sex. This study defined it as having ever engaged in transactional sex, unlike the other two studies that limited it to a period of 3 months before their survey. Sexual intercourse after the use of alcohol or illicit drugs occurred in less than a fifth of respondents in this study and this is lower than reports in the United States and in Ibadan, Nigeria.^{5,24} This may be due to environmental and cultural differences in the former and the inclusion of in-school and out-of-school adolescents in the latter to which the out-of-school adolescents contributed a greater proportion to the finding. This study limited its respondents to in-school adolescents which may have accounted for its lower prevalence.

The mean age at sexual debut in this study was 13.42±2.62 years and there was no statistical difference between males and females. This shows that adolescents are initiating sex at earlier ages as also noted by similar studies done at Ekiti and Uyo, Nigeria which is worrisome as it increases their exposure to adverse effects like lifetime multiple sexual partnerships, contracting STIs/HIV, unwanted pregnancy and its consequences.^{25,26}

Age was a significant determinant of RSB in this study as those in the age categories 10-13 years and 14 to 17 years were less likely to engage in RSB than those older than 18. This is consistent with findings by Nigeria and Mozambique^{21,27} Also students in public schools were twice as likely to practice RSB compared to their counterparts in private schools in this study. This is consistent with findings from another study in Delta state, Nigeria.²⁸ This may be because school authorities frown at such behaviour generally and private schools in particular are stricter in enforcing such rules that will deter RSB among their students.²⁶ Also private schools may engage more in proper sex education of students than public schools.²⁸

Mother-adolescent communication was also significantly associated with RSB. Respondents who had difficulty communicating with their mothers were about 2 times as likely to practice RSB as those who found it easy to do so. This was similarly reported in Ogbomosho, Nigeria and the meta-analysis by Widman et al.^{29,30} Furthermore, Widman et al.³⁰ noted that adolescent communication with the mother correlated positively with safer sex practices. The reason why communication with mothers is significant may be because mothers are usually available and more open to communication as noted by Widman et al.³⁰ Also, mothers were the second most common source of information on sexuality education among respondents in this study. This may further explain why there is an increased risk of RSB among those who found it difficult to communicate with their mothers.

Pressure from peers and romantic partners was statistically significant for RSB in this study as those who reported feeling pressured by friends and partners were more likely to practice RSB. This agrees with findings by from studies in Ethiopia and Nigeria.^{31,32} This is not surprising as during the adolescent period of development, getting the approval of peers to be socially acceptable is an important part of decision-making.²

The mother's level of education was also a statistically significant determinant of RSB in this study as respondents whose mothers had primary and secondary education were more likely to indulge in RSB than those with tertiary education. This

is consistent with findings in Kigali, Rwanda.³³ This might be because mothers with postsecondary educations are better equipped to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues with their teenagers and have more access to trustworthy information on these topics, which helps prevent RSB.³⁴

Finally, several of the respondents who engaged in risky sexual behaviour reported negative outcomes such as teenage pregnancy and/or STI, with a few resorting to abortion. This was similarly reported in another study in Osun, Nigeria.³⁵ This, along with other significant findings in this study, underscores the importance of implementing strategies to reduce risky sexual behaviour among adolescents.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, findings from this study indicate that the prevalence of RSB among in-school adolescents in Yenagoa LGA is high with adolescents indulging in one or more pattern of RSB. Attending public school, difficulty in communicating with mother, having peer or partner pressure and lower maternal level of education were associated with increased odds of engaging in RSB while being less than 18 years old decreased the odds of practising RSB among adolescents in Yenagoa LGA. Advocating for better communication between parents especially mothers, and their adolescent children, health education and peer based health education programs among adolescents may help in curbing this problem.

DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS

- **Adolescent:** an individual between the ages of 10 and 19 years
- **Risky sexual behaviour:** sexual activities that predispose one to contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, and unwanted pregnancy.
- **Early sexual debut:** first sexual intercourse before the age of 18 years.
- **Multiple sexual partnership:** having had sexual intercourse with more than one person before the time of the study.
- **Unprotected sexual intercourse:** failing to use a condom during sexual intercourse at any time before the study.
- **Transactional sex or survival sex:** a non-marital, non-commercial sexual relationship motivated by an implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material support or other benefits.

CONSENT (WHEREEVER APPLICABLE)

All authors declare that 'written informed consent was obtained from the respondents (18years and above) and parents of respondents (for those less than 18years of age). A copy of the written consent is available for review by the Editorial office/Chief Editor/Editorial Board members of this journal.

ETHICAL APPROVAL (WHEREEVER APPLICABLE)

"All authors hereby declare that all experiments have been examined and approved by the appropriate ethics committee and have therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki."

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