

Awareness of Parental Role in Curbing Adolescent Sexual Abuse Among Parents in Akpo Community Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at ascertaining the level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse among parents in Akpo community Anambra-state, In line with the objectives of the study, three research questions and two null hypotheses were postulated. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. A sample frame of six hundred parents were drawn by the use of multistage sampling procedure. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The test re-test reliability was applied to obtain a correlation co-efficient of. 70 which was considered high for the study. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage and grand average as well as inferential statistics of chi-square were used for data analysis. The result among others is that the level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse based on sexuality issues, guidance during puberty and parent's personal sexual discipline. Statistics analyses revealed that there is significant relationship between male and female parents in their level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Significant relationship also existed among parents of various religious affiliations in their level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Based on the finding and conclusions recommendations are made pertinent among which is Health educators should enlighten parents on their roles towards the growth of adolescents by organizing seminars, workshops or educating them during men's meeting or women's meeting in the community..

Keyword : *Awareness, Parental Role, Adolescent, and Sexual Abuse.*

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the factors that leads to sexual abuse by adolescent could be traced to the ignorance and negligence of their parents. In many homes and due to the custom and traditions of the land many parents do not want to engage in discussion

that have to do with sexual matters with children, in few homes that think it necessary to discuss the issues, parents do not know what to say and the right time to discuss it (Salami 2000). Children of nowadays are very intelligent and curious: they like to practicalise any learning in any form that is suitable to them. Once they are not guided, the consequences of the behaviour not withstanding.

According to Udoh (1999) boys and girls in early adolescence are prevented from interaction with each others as much as possible to avoid masturbation between the opposite sex. This could result to early sex. During adolescence, teenagers experience hormonal changes that may prompt sexual feelings. Physically, the boy is developing the capacity to generate life. The sex organs are maturing and typically by the end of puberty both males and females have the ability to procreate. Adolescent experience some developmental changes such as enlargement of the breast, public hairs around the sex organs manacha in girls; increase in the size of testes and scrotum in males and so on. These developmental changes make the adolescent to feel that they have grown and matured and it makes them to engage in sexual activity to express emotions related to love while some especially males have sex for pleasure rather than emotional closeness. The abuse of sex by female adolescents may predispose them to early pregnancy which can ruin their lives or make some females to hate men with passion. Such abuse can lead to sexually transmitted infections (STI) Klein (1999) defined sexuality as the timeless, faceless and unclaimed essence of our identity. Sexuality includes biological gender attitudes and perceptions, sense of self relationship sexual practice, fantasies, concepts of love romance and pleasure. Sexuality is in the mind and body Sexuality according to Gordon and Eric (1997) represents truly holistic aspect of living for its involves the whole self (simultaneous expression of mind, body and spirit). Ejifugha (2006) defined adolescence as a stage of life in which an individual undergoes physical and mental changes over which he or she has no control. Ejifugha identified the age bracket as chronologically falling between twelve to twenty-one years of age. Adolescent is a period one feels he or she has grown and matured, Chauhan (1996) defined an adolescent as a person who is undergoing a stage of development between childhood and adulthood.

The parents of adolescents have roles to play in the life of their teen sons and daughters. They must adopt to the developmental growth and changes of the adolescents. Parenting the adolescent push for freedom failure to adhere to parental advice and peer pressure. Parental support is one of the contributions parents can make to their teens development (Steinberg, 2000), The greater the parents support the greater the adolescent's social competence (self esteem, moral behaviour and academic achievement). Support can be shown in several ways such as physical affection, companionship and sustained contact. Steinberg (2006), was of the view that understanding of the adolescent by parents is significantly needed in the life of adolescent. It is through understanding that parents can connect to their teens world. Parents can understand their teens through free communication. Adolescent

appreciates parents listening to them. Listening equips parents with better understanding of their roles as a father or mother.

These roles help in controlling adolescent sexual abuse. The primary source of information regarding sexuality should be from parents. Parents are looked up to as role models. They are expected to be the mirror to their adolescents and other children. Furthermore, parents with tertiary level of education are more likely to have the financial resources for constructive extra curricular activities and other pre-social activities that provide adolescents with a greater sense of self-worth and coping skills than those with non-formal education Radin (1997). The role that parents assume is therefore extremely influential to adolescent sexual behaviours, ignorance of parental roles in sexuality of adolescents may lead to negative consequences. Such consequences include loss of control by parents who may not be aware of the developmental growth of the adolescent.

In Akpo community some adolescents are school dropouts due to early pregnancy which makes them to become teen parents especially girls. Some unmarried girls have their babies in their fathers house and continue their education leaving their babies with their parents at home. It is against adolescents safety and successful transition to adulthood that the researchers were motivated towards ascertain the level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse among parents in Akpo community. The following research questions were posited to guide the study.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse among parents in Akpo community based on guidance during puberty?
2. What is the level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse among parents in Akpo community based on their gender?
3. What is the level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse among parents in Akpo community based on their religious affiliations?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between male and female parents in Akpo community in their level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse,
2. There is no significant relationship among parents of various religions affiliations in Akpo community in their level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse.

METHODS

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. This design was considered appropriate for the study because it involved a fraction of the population that has the same characteristic. The appropriateness of this research design could be

adduced from the use in similar studies by previous researcher. Ukatu (2002) used survey to appraise expanded programme on immunization in Enugu local government area.

The accessible population for the study consisted of all the parents from the eighteen (18) autonomous communities that make up Akpo community. The sample consisted of 600 parents from Akpo community, simple random sampling by balloting with replacement was used in selecting the number of parents for data collection. The main instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher following review of related literature. The structured questionnaire was segmented into three sections. Section "A" contained two closed ended questions on personal data of the respondents. Section 'B' contained five questions based on guidance during puberty. The instrument was submitted to health education experts in Nigerian universities for validation. All their corrections were adequately effected in restructuring the instrument.

Reliability of the instrument was established by exposing the structured questionnaire twice for reliability using test re-test method. Ten parents (male and female) from Uga community in Anambra State were used for the test re-test. Thirteen days later the same subjects were revisited and fresh copies of the same questionnaire to them with the help of town men the test re-test reliability coefficient of 70 was obtained when the scored from the first administration were correlated with the scores from the second administration using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Out of 600 copies of the questionnaire distributed 587 (98.5%) were returned and used for data analysis.

The responses to the structured questionnaire were code appropriately and collated in terms of frequencies of the response options. Appropriate cross-tabulation of variables were done in testing the two null hypotheses. The researcher made use of the university grading system in which scores 70% and above were considered high level of awareness, scores between 50% and 69% were considered moderate level of awareness while scores below 50% were considered low level awareness.

Results:

Results of the data analysis are shown in tables I

Respondents awareness of parental role in curbing adolescent sexual abuse based on guidance during puberty.

		Level of awareness			
	Guidance during puberty	High	Moderate	Low	Total
1	Parents should guide their adolescent on the dangers of pre-marital affairs.	* 103(17.5)	* 187(31.9)	297(50.6)	587(100)

2	Parents should guide their adolescents that indecent dressing may predispose them to raping scoffing & sexual harassment.	167 (28.4)	155(26.4)	265(45.1)	587(100)
3	Parents should guide their adolescents on the dangers of watching pornographic films / Magazines.	170(29)	142(24.2)	275(47)	587(100)
4	Parents should counsel their adolescents on the dangers of reading romantic novels.	167 (28.4)	127(22)	293(50)	587(100)
5	Parents should educate their adolescents on sexuality matters.	128(22)	169(28.8)	290(49.4)	587(100)
Grand Total		735	780	1420	
Grand Average		(147)	(156)	(284)	

Figures in parentheses are percentage (2). Table 1 revealed that 103 (17.5%) respondents possessed high level of awareness, 187 (31.9%) possessed moderate level while 297 (50.6%) possessed low level of awareness respectively on guidance concerning dangers of pre-marital sexual affairs. Responding to issue of parents guiding their adolescents on dangers of indecent dressing (rapping scoffing and sexual harassment) 167 (28,4%) respondents possessed high level of awareness 155 (26.4%) possessed moderate level while 265 (45.1%) possessed low level of awareness respectively on the same issue.

Concerning counseling their adolescents on dangers of reading romantic novels 167 (28.4%) respondents possessed high level of awareness, 127 (22%) possessed moderate level while 293 (50%) respondents possessed low level of awareness respectively on the same issue. Finally on education regarding sexuality matters, 128 (22%) respondents possessed high level of awareness, 169 (28.8%) possessed moderate level of awareness, while 290 (49.4%) possessed low level of awareness respectively on the same issue.

Table II.

Chi-square analysis of the level of awareness on parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse based on gender.

Gender	Levels of Awareness			
	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Male	100(17.9%)	50(8.5%)	84 (14.3%)	234(39.9%)
Female	47(8.0%)	106(18.1%)	200(34.1%)	353(60.1%)
Total	284 (48.4%)	156(26.6%)	147(25.0%)	587 (100%)

Cal $X^2 = 65.1$, $X^2 .05=991$

dt = 2, $p < .05$.

Table 2 showed that there was significant relationship between male and female respondents in their level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Male respondents disclosed higher level of awareness than the female.

Table III

Chi-square analysis of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse based on religious affiliations.

Religious Affiliation	Levels of Awareness.			
	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Roman catholic	30(5.1%)	59(10.1%)	132(22.5%)	221 (37.6%)
Anglican	60(10.2%)	31 (5.3%)	50(8.5%)	141 (24.0%)
Pentecostal	57 (9.7%)	66(11.2%)	102(17.4%)	225(38.3%)
Total	284(48.4%)	156(26.6%)	147(25.0%)	587(100%)

Cal $X^2 = 41.57$, $x^2 .05 = 9.48$

Df = 41, $p < .05$.

Table 3 showed that there was significant relationship among respondents of various religious affiliations in their level of awareness of parents roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Respondents who are Anglican revealed highest level of awareness, while those who are Roman Catholic reveals the lowest level of awareness.

Discussion

Result of the study (table 1) revealed that parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse was low. This was unexpected. One would have expected parents to play the highest roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Related literature also confirmed that some parents have the Knowledge of the roles they should play to their

adolescents but do not understand what is puberty so they don't really guide their adolescents during puberty. Radin (1998). Also Smith (2000) explained that parents know the roles they should play in the life of their adolescents but do not understand the physical changes of adolescence and also the psychological and emotional changes of their adolescents that should motivate such roles. According to table 2 above showed that male respondents revealed higher level than the female. Related literature confirmed that female parents are closer to the children than male parents so they should have more awareness than male parents but it is not so. The occupational status of some mothers also give them time to stay with their adolescents than their fathers, mothers pay much attention to the needs and problems of their adolescents than the fathers (Udoh 2003).

Table 3 revealed that level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse is based on religious affiliation. Anglican respondents revealed highest level of awareness while Roman Catholic respondents showed lowest level of awareness. Related literature confirmed that religious beliefs affects parents level of awareness and their roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Religious sometimes influence parents in their roles concerning sexuality (Kirby 2000).

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion were made based on the research finding of this study and with reference to the statistical analysis used. The level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse based on guidance during puberty is low. There is significant relationship between male and female parents in their level of awareness of parental roles in curbing adolescent sexual abuse. Male respondent possessed high level of awareness than the female. Curriculum planners should enforce the teaching of sex education in the health curriculum at various levels of education. Health educators should enlighten parents on their roles towards the growth of adolescents by organizing seminars, workshops or educating them during men's meeting or women's meeting in the community on issues regarding adolescents sexuality.

Women's ministries in different religions denominations should periodically organize interactive sessions aimed at educating women on their personal sexual lives as well as sexuality issues concerning their adolescent.

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