

The role of family dynamics on risky sexual behaviour among youth in south west, Nigeria

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Background: Youth often involve in risky sexual behaviour consequent to the challenge of being unable to make right decisions. Given that the family is a social unit that influences individual behaviours, it may play a role on sexual risk taking by youths. The objective was to assess the association between relationship within the family and risky sexual practice among youth in Ibadan, South West, Nigeria.

Method: A hospital-based cross-sectional descriptive study among 370 sexually active youths who were recruited in a family medicine clinic. Quantitative data were obtained on socio-demography, family relationship using family relationship index scale, current pattern of sexual behaviour. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and association were tested using Chi-square and t-tests at 5% level of significance.

Results: The mean age of respondents was 21.9±2.1 years and male: female ratio was 1:1.8. A higher proportion of the respondents engaged in unsafe sexual behaviour. Youth who

engaged in risky sexual behaviour had lower mean family cohesion score (6.77±1.935 versus 7.34±2.432; p=0.003) and family communication score (5.71±1.769 versus 5.45±1.919; p= 0.225) than youth who engaged in safe sexual practice. However, youth that practiced risky sex had a higher mean conflict score than those who engaged in safe sexual behaviour (2.88±1.884 versus 2.30±1.959; p value=0.011). Similarly, composite family relationship index (FRI) showed that youth who engaged in risky sexual behaviour were more from conflict oriented-families compared to youth from support-oriented families ($\chi^2 = 5.869$; p=0.015).

Conclusion: The study found that conflict oriented families predispose youth to engaging in risky sexual behaviour.

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