

Determinants and Effects of Unwanted Pregnancy Among Students of Higher Institutions in Port Harcourt

Austin-Asomeji I.¹, Gbaranor K. B.^{2*}, Mube W. A.³, Bademosi A.¹, Okpara E. P.², Reuben E.², Oriji I. E.², George B. O.⁴, Ohaka J. C.¹, Bruce I.¹, Ajumoke O. O.⁵, Famba Famba D.⁶

¹Department of Community Medicine, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

²Department of Human Physiology, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

³Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

⁴Department of Medical Biochemistry, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

⁵Department of Nursing Sciences, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

⁶Department of Family Medicine, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract Pregnancy among reproductive age is what a woman needs to plan and desire it before conception to avoid uncertainty. Most students having been facing unwanted pregnancy while in school. This study was carried out to ascertain the determinants and effects of unwanted pregnancy among students of higher institutions in Port Harcourt. This is a cross-sectional study involving 104 respondents. The respondents were between the ages 16-40 years. The study revealed that most of the respondents have intermittent unprotected sex. The study shows that several of the respondents consumed excess alcohol. Most of the respondents are not financially buoyant and majority of the students' lives in the rural areas while few lives in the urban areas. Also, many of the respondents stayed off-campus and most of the students have been impregnated. 65.8% of the respondents have their academics affected. The study revealed that 54.7% of the students have depression due to unwanted pregnancy. Several of the students who got pregnant face stigmatization and many of the respondents were single.

Keywords Determinants, Effects, Unwanted pregnancy, Students, Higher institutions

1. Introduction

Pregnancy is an important process that every married women desire to pass through in their matrimonial homes and it is a planned and desire one. Getting pregnant as a single and as a student will virtually hinder academic's progression.

Desired conception is when both couple agree to bear children, based on favourable conditions (Gbaranor *et al*, 2020). However, unwanted pregnancy is an untimely, unplanned and undesired pregnancy that could occur in a single lady, married couple, divorced and co-habitual partners.

Unplanned pregnancy gives a multiplicity of problems for students and academic institutions.

Through study revealed that, the costs incurred, when a student's academic life is disrupted due to an unplanned pregnancy is much (Naidoo and Kasiram, 2006). The academic programme is derailed with serious financial costs incurred by the institution, the family and the individual. However, the institution may be affected, leaving a trail of

deficits that are difficult to manage, together with a bruised public image that impacts negatively on student intake. At a psycho-social level the individual and family lose standing in the community because of the shame of an unplanned pregnancy and an illegitimate child, or trauma upon learning of a positive HIV diagnosis accompanying pregnancy (Naidoo and Kasiram, 2006). Student's pregnancy is a public concern that is related to major negative effects towards females' physiological, psychological and social functioning, throughout the world (Mba, 2003; De Jong, 2001; Parekh & De la Rey, 1997).

Studies confirmed that the United State of America continues to have the highest rate of student's pregnancy and birth amongst developed countries (Gaudie *et al*, 2010; Minnick & Shandler, 2011) although a similar trend is noticeable in developing countries, such as, South Africa (Devenish, *et al*, 2004).

Stuart, 2013 revealed that student's pregnancy is on the increase in South Africa when compared to countries like, Chad and Mozambique, where there is poverty, wars and under-age marriages which restrict and negatively impact on youth development in terms of cognitive, emotional and physiological aspects. Also, study revealed that, in South Africa (SA), unplanned pregnancies among youth pose a

* Corresponding author:

barinua.gbaranor@ust.edu.ng (Gbaranor K. B.)

Received: Jun. 15, 2022; Accepted: Jul. 29, 2022; Published: Sep. 23, 2022

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/ajmms>

serious public health concern, as they expose young women and their newborns to potential adverse health and social outcomes (Ikamari *et al*, 2013; Ali *et al*, 2016). These include the likelihood of unsafe abortion, maternal depression and anxiety, premature birth and low birth weight (Ikamari *et al*, 2013; Say *et al*, 2014; Reddy *et al*, 2016). Furthermore, unplanned pregnancies are socially disruptive and impact negatively on educational progress and future career prospects (Sibeko, 2012). Women with unintended pregnancies are likely to be less well educated and poorer than women without such pregnancies (Ma yondi *et al*, 2016).

Unplanned pregnancy occurs mainly as a result of contraceptive failure and inconsistent or non-use of contraceptives, including inconsistent use of condoms (Bradley *et al*, 2011; Ipadeola *et al*, 2013; Asimwe *et al*, 2014; Moodley *et al*, 2015). A number of factors have been associated with unplanned or unintended pregnancies among youth. These include socioeconomic, demographic and behavioural factors such as poor socioeconomic status, age, living arrangements, peer pressure, sexual coercion, sex socialisation, unprotected sex, ignorance, and negative attitudes towards contraception (Mayondi *et al*, 2016; Skiles *et al*, 2015; De Lannoy *et al*, 2015). Compared with their peers who delay childbearing, young women who have babies are less likely to finish high school, more likely to be poor as adults, and more liable to have kids who have poorer behavioural, educational, and health outcomes over the course of their lives (Cook & Cameron, 2015).

2. Material and Methods

A cross-sectional study was carried out among female students in higher institutions in Port Harcourt. The study lasted for six weeks and 104 female students participated with age ranges between 16 and 40. The participants were randomly selected and well-structured questionnaires were given to each participant to respond to each question in the questionnaire after a well-informed consent was granted. Statistical analysis of data was done using Excel. P value < 0.05 was considered significant for data.

3. Results

A total of 104 students (respondents) participated in the study. The respondents were between the ages 16-40 years (Table 1). The study revealed that 64.4% of the respondents have intermittent unprotected sex and 35.6% used protective device (Table 2). 2.9% of the respondents have been raped while 97.1% have not been rape. The study shows that 79.8% of the respondents consumed excess alcohol, 20.2% do not (Table 3). 74% of the respondents are not financially buoyant (Table 4). The study shows that 76% of the students live in the rural areas and 24% lives in the urban areas. 51% of the respondents stayed off-campus while 49% stayed on campus

(Table 5); 52.4% of the students have been impregnated and with a null response 1 (Table 6). 65.8% of the respondents have their academics affected with a null response of 25 (Table 7). The study revealed that 54.7% of the students have depression due to unwanted pregnancy (Table 9). 52.6% of the students face stigmatization and 79.8% of the respondents were single.

Table 1. Age of respondents

16-20	21-25	31-35	36-40
17	46	38	5

Table 2. Respondents who engages in intermittent unprotected sex

Unprotected sex	Protected sex
67	37
64.4%	35.6%

Table 3. Respondents who consumed excess alcohol

Do not consume alcohol	Consumed excess alcohol
21	83
20.2%	79.8%

Table 4. Level of financially buoyant

Financially buoyant	Not financially buoyant
27	77
26%	74%

Table 5. Location of the respondents during her academic programme

Stayed off-campus	Stayed on campus
53	51
51%	49%

Table 6. Respondents who got pregnant

Pregnant	Not pregnant	No response
54	49	1
52.4%	47.6%	

Table 7. Academic performance

Poor academic performance	Good academic performance	No response
52	27	25
65.8%	34.2%	

4. Discussion

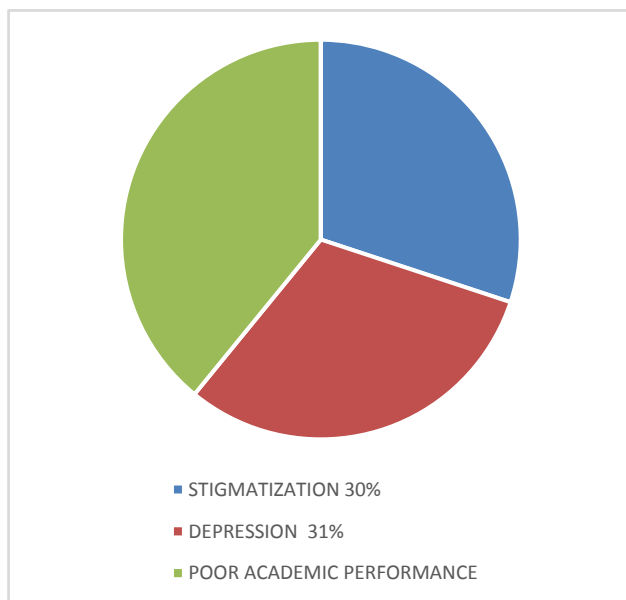
Pregnancy is an important process that every married women desire to pass through in their matrimonial homes and it could be a planned and desire process. Getting pregnant as a single and as a student will virtually hinder your academic's progression. Most female students have been facing several problems and challenges including school dropped-out and humiliation due to unwanted pregnancy.

Table 8. Determinants and effect of unwanted pregnancy

Variables	Female students with an unwanted pregnancy	
	N	%
Unprotected sex	51	94.4
Rape	1	1.85
Economic status		
Buoyant	19	35.1
Not buoyant	36	66.6
Academic performance		
Below Average	31	57.4
Average	22	40.7
Above average	1	1.85
Alcohol intake		
Excess	36	66.6
Normal	18	33.3

Table 9. Respondents who experience depression as a result of unwanted pregnancy

Yes	No	No response
41	34	29
54.7%	45.3%	

**Figure 1.** Effects of unwanted pregnancy

Desired conception is when both couple agree bear children, based on favourable conditions (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2020). However, unwanted pregnancy is an untimely, unplanned and undesired process and could occur in a single lady, married couple, divorced and co-habitual partners. However, the study revealed that unwanted pregnancy was as a result of unprotected sex, peers, poor parental background and poor economic status.

Sex is one of the common attitude students easily learned and if not control, take much of their time while in an academic environment. Most students while they are home, maintain decorum but moment they go back to school, their attitude changed probably because they are not under their

parent's control.

The study discovered that 64.4% of the respondents have intermittent, unprotected sex while 35.6% used protective device (Table 2). This rise in intermittent, unprotected sex among students is alarming and this could be attributed to lack of enlightenment campaign, unavailability of protective device or apathy towards the use of protective device. This increased in unprotected sex could bring several calamities to the institution, student, and family. The study shows that 52.4% of the respondents got pregnant whereas 47.6% did not get pregnant (Table 6). These pregnancies could be due to the respondents engaging in intermittent unprotected sex. However, most of the students naturally does not enjoy sex with protective device and this singular attitude has endanger their lives due to the aftermath or consequences of unprotected sex. This singular attitude of not putting on protective device during sexual intercourse when pregnancy is not desired could lead to unwanted pregnancy or contacting sexually transmitted disease (STI). This study agreed with previous studies by Bradley *et al.*, 2011; Ipadeola *et al.*, 2013; Asimwe *et al.*, 2014; Moodley *et al.*, 2015 which revealed the occurrence of unplanned pregnancy due to contraceptive failure and inconsistent or non-use of contraceptives, including inconsistent use of condoms. This unplanned pregnancy among the respondents exposed them to several problems including school drop-out making them less educated, poor academic performance, depression and stigmatization and this is in consonant with previous study by (Mayondi *et al.*, 2016 which revealed that women with unintended pregnancies are likely to be less well educated and poorer than women without such pregnancies.

Also, the study revealed that 79.8% of the students consumed excess alcohol (Table 3). This could also be the reason while most of the students did not use condom during sex likely because they are intoxicated and could not lay hand on protective device. Also, excessive intake of alcohol may intoxicate the student and this may give room to the male counterpart to have unprotected sex in a hurry and if she was on her unsafe period then pregnancy may result. 51% of the students stayed off-campus in a rented apartment (Table 5) and this could be one of the determinants of unwanted and unplanned pregnancy that occur among students while in school. This is because the student has freedom to do any she wants to do, since she lives alone and not in the hostel where other students are also living. Off-campus, the student has no control and therefor, she can do anything including bringing her male counterpart in or travel out to spend nights or days with her male counterpart. The study shows that 74% of the students faced financial incapability (Table 4), and this may expose the students to engaged in certain activity including commercial sex in order to meet up her school programme. 2.9% of the students were raped probably due to excess consumption of alcohol or probably at their rented apartment off-campus.

76% of the students live in the rural areas and 24% lives in the urban areas. This could be the reason while most of the students have unprotected sex. It is because they are not well

educated or no awareness about the use of condom or other contraceptives.

The study revealed that 65.8% of the respondents have poor academic performance while 34.2% have good academic performance (Table 7). This could be attributed to consumption of alcohol by the students which may affect the memory. Again, unwanted pregnancy gives rise to stigmatization, depression, poor assimilation and self-isolation could hinders the respondent's academic progression. Therefore, this is one of the major effects of unwanted and unplanned pregnancy among students in tertiary institution across the globe. Also, 54.7% of the respondents are depressed and 52.6% faced stigmatization due to unwanted and unplanned pregnancy. Considering the pie chart, 30% of the students were stigmatized, 31% were depressed and 39% have poor academic performance.

It is important to know that the study revealed the determinants of unwanted pregnancy which include unprotected sex, intake of excessive alcohol, rape, financial incapability and staying in a rented apartment that is away from the campus while poor academic performance, stigmatization and depression are effects of unwanted pregnancy (Table 8 and Figure 1).

5. Conclusions

Unwanted pregnancy among students have caused a lot of calamities and the study revealed factors such as unprotected sex, intake of excessive alcohol, rape, financial incapability and staying in a rented apartment that is away from the school campus as determinants of unwanted pregnancy while poor academic performance, school drop-out, stigmatization and depression as effects of unwanted pregnancy among female students in tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledged Nazor Barinua-Gbaranor, Nuazor V. Barinua-Gbaranor, Kedumle S. Barinua-Gbaranor for their support, understanding and encouragement during the study period. We also acknowledged Excellent Support Global Foundation for their moral support.

Declarations

Funding: Self-funding

Conflict of interest: No conflict of interest

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