



Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Towards Sexually Transmitted Diseases among Undergraduate Students in Ahmadu Bello University, Main Campus, Samaru, Zaria.

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Abstract

Background: Worldwide, over a million people acquire a sexually transmitted infection (STI) daily. Young individuals of 16-24 years age group are more prone to STIs because they lack adequate knowledge about STIs and tend to have wrong perceptions towards sex. **Aim:** This study aims to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practice towards sexually transmitted diseases among undergraduate students of ABU main campus, Samaru, Zaria. **Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used, in which 440 questionnaires were administered for the study among which 411 (93%) were retrieved and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. **Results:** Results obtained showed that 77% of the respondents had good knowledge, attitudes of the respondents were found to be positive with an aggregate mean of 4.12 and 67% uses a condom for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. **Conclusion:** From the findings of the study, it was concluded that undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria had good knowledge, positive attitudes, and good preventive practices towards sexually transmitted diseases.

Keywords: Sexually transmitted diseases, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, undergraduate students

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Introduction

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) of youths have emerged as an issue of great concern, particularly to the policymakers, health service providers, family, community, and individuals (Zin, Ishak & Manoharan, 2019).

Worldwide, over a million people acquire a sexually transmitted infection (STI) daily. Every year, there are an estimated 357 million new infections with one of the four STIs globally: chlamydia (131 million), gonorrhoea (78 million), syphilis (5.6 million), or trichomoniasis (143 million) (WHO, 2016). Approximately 20 million new cases of STIs are reported every year in the United States, of which the majority occur among people aged between 15 and 24 years (CDC, 2018).

The Nigerian National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) in 2018 reported that 13% of young men and 1% of young women aged between 15 and 49 years have multiple sexual partners. Sixteen of men and 27% of never-married women and divorced, separated, or widowed women had sexual intercourse with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them (National Population Commission, 2019).

Adolescent sexuality leads to adolescent pregnancy, unsafe abortion, reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV (Jain, Jain, Patil & Bang, 2016). Prevention of STIs includes counselling, behavioural interventions, comprehensive sexuality education, STI and HIV pre- and post-test counselling, condom promotion and

interventions targeted at key populations (WHO, 2016).

In view of the above, the researcher embarks on the study to assess the level of knowledge, attitude and practice towards sexually transmitted diseases among undergraduate students of ABU main campus, Samaru, Zaria. Hence the objective of this paper includes; assessing the level of knowledge of the undergraduate students towards sexually transmitted diseases, determine the correlation between the level of education and knowledge of STDs, to explore the attitude of the undergraduate students towards sexually transmitted diseases, and to determine the practice of the undergraduate students towards sexually transmitted diseases.

This study when concluded will provide information on the knowledge, attitude and practice towards sexually transmitted diseases among undergraduate students of ABU main campus, Samaru, Zaria. The information can be used by the university management in instituting appropriate preventive measures as well as planning for the educational needs of the students regarding the prevention and management of sexually transmitted diseases. The study will draw the attention of the policymakers and government on health planning.

The study will give room for further research studies on this topic.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used to determine the knowledge, attitude, and practice towards sexually transmitted diseases among undergraduate students of ABU main campus, Samaru, Zaria. A cross-sectional study design provides information concerning the situation at a given time (Osuji, 2017). In this type of study, the status of an individual with respect to a particular item is assessed at the same point in time.

Study Area

The study was carried out in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria main campus Samaru Zaria,

Kaduna State. Zaria is one of the 23 LGAs in Kaduna State, lying approximately south of Kaduna. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria is the largest university in Nigeria and second-largest in Africa after Cairo University Egypt. It was created in 1962 following the amalgamation of Northern Nigeria. The university has two campuses: Samaru (main campus) and Kongo campus in Zaria. Consisting of 13 faculties, 60 academic departments, and 12 research institutes, and specialized centers, the university offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in many fields of specialization and currently has a total of 42,283 undergraduate students.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 396 was obtained using Yamane formula 1967: $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$. With a non-response rate of 10%, the sample size became 436. However, a sample of 440 was used for the study.

A probability sampling technique was employed in which cluster sampling method was used where the students were clustered according to their faculties. The respondents were randomly selected based on the proportion allocated to each faculty to participate in the study after receiving his/her informed consent.

Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was well-structured self-administered questionnaires. Four hundred and forty questionnaires were administered for the study, the questionnaire contained four sections to elicit respondent's information on socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge of STDs, attitudes of the respondents towards STDs, and practices of the respondents towards STDs. Four points Likert-scale was used to determine the attitudes of the respondents towards STDs

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical methods were used in which data was analyzed and presented in

form of frequencies, percentages, and mean using Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Ethical Consideration

An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Nursing Sciences ABU Zaria before embarking on the study, the respondents voluntarily respond to the questionnaire, anonymity was ensured and the information was treated confidentially.

Response Rate

A total of 440 questionnaires were distributed among undergraduate students in the Samaru campus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Four hundred and eleven questionnaires which accounted for 93% were retrieved and valid for analyses, while 39 (7%) of the remaining questionnaire were regarded invalid because they were not returned after the administration.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency(n=411)	Percentage (%)
Age(years)		
15-20	91	22
21-25	230	56
26-30	64	16
31 & above	26	06
Total	411	100
Sex		
Female	221	54
Male	190	46
Total	411	100
Marital Status		
Single	301	73
Married	110	27
Total	411	100
Ethnic group		
Hausa	205	50
Yoruba	86	21
Igbo	50	12
Others	70	17
Total	411	100
Religion		
Islam	257	63
Christianity	154	37
Total	411	100
Faculty		
Art	40	10
Social science	52	13
Science	90	22
Education	70	17
Medicine	21	5
Pharmacy	11	3
Engineering	61	15
Environmental design	30	7
Veterinary medicine	30	7
Agriculture	6	1

Variables	Frequency(n=411)	Percentage (%)
Total	411	100
Level		
100	60	15
200	60	15
300	90	22
400	117	28
500	84	20
Total	411	100

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents (56%) are within the age of 21-25 years, 22% are within 15-20 years, 16% are within 20-30 years while 6% are within 31 years and above, 54% are female while 46% are male and 73% are single while 27% are married.

It also shows that the majority of the respondents (50%) are Hausa, followed by Yoruba 21%, Igbo 12% and 17% representing other tribes, 63% are Muslims and 37% are Christians. The table further shows that 22%

are from faculty of Science, followed by 17% from faculty of Education, 15% from faculty of Engineering, 13% from faculty of Social Sciences, 10% from faculty of Art, 7% from faculty of Environmental Design, 7% from faculty of Veterinary Medicine, 5% from faculty of Medicine, 3% from Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences and 1% from faculty of Agriculture. While a majority (28%) of the respondents are from 400 level, 22% from 300 level, 20% from 500 level, 15% from 200 level, and another 15% from 100 level.

Table 4.2: Level of knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases of the Respondents

Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	14	3.5
Fair	80	19.5
Good	317	77
	411	100

The table above shows the level of knowledge of the respondents towards STDs. 9 questions were designed to determine the level of knowledge and a score with grades was allocated to each question (1 mark for each correct answer and 0 for incorrect answer). A

score of 0-2 means poor knowledge, the score of 4-5 means fair knowledge, and a score of 6-7 means good knowledge. The table shows that the majority of the respondents (77%) have good knowledge of STDs, followed by 19.5% with fair knowledge and 3.5% have poor knowledge of STDs.

Table 4.3 Correlation between level of education and knowledge of STDs using Spearman Rank correlation coefficient

Data 1 (level of education)	Data 2 (level of knowledge)	Rank 1	Rank 2	D	d ²
60	46	1.5	1	0.5	0.25
60	47	1.5	2	-0.5	0.25
90	76	3.5	3	0.5	0.25
117	100	5	5	0	0
84	94	3.5	4	-0.5	0.25
					£d ² =1

$$P = 1 - (\frac{£d^2}{n(n^2-1)})$$

Where n=5, £d²=1

$$P = 1 - (\frac{6 \times 1^2}{5(5^2-1)})$$

$$P = 0.95$$

This shows that there is a positive correlation between the level of education and knowledge of STDs among undergraduate students.

Students with a higher level of education respond more accurately to the general knowledge of STDs.

Table 4.4: Attitude of the respondents towards sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

Statement	Mean score
STDs exist all over the world	4.62
STDs can be spread through non-sexual contacts	3.35
STDs can be prevented	4.56
STDs can lead to cervical cancer in women	3.94
Use of condom decrease the risk of transmitting STDs	4.14

The table above shows the mean score of the respondent’s attitude towards STDs. The mean score of each statement is clearly shown. The aggregate mean is 4.12 and the decision mean is 3.

Statement one “STDs exist all over the world” has a mean score of 4.62 which is above the decision means (3), statement two “STDs can be spread through non-sexual contacts” has a

mean score of 3.35 which is above the decision mean (3), statement three “STDs can be prevented” has a mean score of 4.56 which is above the decision mean (3), statement four “STDs can lead to 9=[8cervical cancer in women” has a mean score of 3.94 which is above the decision mean (3) and statement five “use of condom decrease the risk of transmitting STDs” has a mean score of 4.14 which is above the decision mean (3).

Table 4.5: Practice of the respondents towards sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Sexual partners		
None	107	26
One	123	30
Multiple sexual partner	181	44
Total	411	100
Use of condom		
Yes	275	67
No	136	37
Total	411	100
Vaccination		
Yes	210	51
No	151	49
Total	411	100
Frequency of STDs screening		
Never	25	6
After an unprotected sex	96	23
Weekly	18	4
Monthly	148	36
Yearly	124	30
Total	411	100
Actions taken when		

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
symptoms of STDs are observed		
Seek medical advice	381	93
Go to traditional healers	17	4
Ignore the symptoms	5	1
Change partner	8	2
Total	411	100

Table 4.5 above shows that a large number (67%) of the respondents used condoms. Most (44%) of the respondents had multiple sexual partners, while 49% have never been vaccinated against STDs, 36% go for screening monthly and the majority (93%) seek medical advice when they observe symptoms of STDs.

Discussion

The findings revealed that 77% of the respondents have good knowledge of STDs, followed by 19.5% with fair knowledge and 3.5% have poor knowledge of STDs. This implies that the majority of the respondents were knowledgeable about STDs. This is a bit related to the submission of Oluwole, Oyekanmi, Ogunyemi & Osanyin (2020) who reported that about two-thirdss (65.6%) had good knowledge of STDs, which shows that awareness about the existence of STDs was high among the respondents. The result obtained also shows the positive correlation between the level of education and knowledge of STDs among undergraduate students. Students with a higher level of education respond more accurately to the general knowledge of STDs. Oluwole et al. (2020) also reported that knowledge of STI was statistically significantly associated with age, level of education, attitude, and preventive practices of the respondents.

On attitudes towards STDs, the result obtained has shown that the majority of the respondents have a positive attitude towards STDs with an aggregate mean is 4.12. This goes contrary to the findings of Jain et al. (2016) which reported that the attitude of students about having multiple sexual partners was very casual and significant proportions

(39%) of students also feel that sexual intercourse makes them popular.

On practices towards STDs, the result obtained has shown that majority (67%) of the less than half (49%) have never been vaccinated against STDs, about one-third (36%) goes for screening monthly and the majority (93%) seek medical advice when they observe symptoms of STDs. This may be due to their high level of knowledge and positive attitudes towards STDs. This goes contrary to the findings of Oluwole et al. (2020) who reported that less than half (34.0%) of the respondents had good preventive practices.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria had good knowledge, positive attitudes, and good preventive practices towards sexually transmitted diseases.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. To sustain the current knowledge, there should be continuous awareness about sexually transmitted diseases to undergraduate students. Sexual education should be introduced at the university as a means of increasing students' awareness about the problem and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.
2. A good collaboration between family, school, and government agencies should be created. Family and schools should be

the main source of information regarding sexual health.

3. The university management should ensure regular health screening on STDs and their treatments should be made more available to the students.

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