

Prevalence and Underlying Factors of Induced Abortions among Students in Tertiary Institutions in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract: Unplanned and undesired pregnancy among students expose them to emotional, social, physical and psychological trauma and thus making the students to seek for unqualified personnel in routine and unsafe environment or areas where they will not be exposed. This study is aim to evaluate the Prevalence and Underlying Factors of Induced Abortions among Students in Tertiary Institutions in South-South Nigeria. This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 students. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 3 months. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 and $p < 0.05$ was significant. The results revealed that the participants were between 18 to 47 years of age and shows that 20% were married, 80% were single, 48% were also doing business, 76% were aware of STI, 60% were pregnant, 60% have choice of terminating pregnancy and 76% had complications in an attempt to terminate the unwanted pregnancy.

Keywords: Prevalence, Underlying Factors, Induced, Abortions, Tertiary, Institutions.

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 agreed 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-habital partners (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2020).

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. Studies confirmed that the United State of

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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 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; Asiimwe *et al.*, 2014; Moodley *et al.*, 2015).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 married women who were within the age of 18 to 47 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the Research Assistants. Data collection took place over two months, from April to July, 2025. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 and $p < 0.05$ was significant.

RESULTS

The results shows that majority of the participants were between the 18 and 37 years of age. Many (80%) of the participants were single (Table 1). The participants despite being students engaged themselves in various entrepreneurship (Table 2), 76% were pregnant (Table 3), 60% have choice for termination of the unwanted pregnancy (Table 4). The participants gave different reasons of choice for termination of the unwanted pregnancy such as not comfortable (12%), shameful (24%), may lead to drop-out (28%), psychological trauma (12%), isolation (12%), and (12%), may affect their academics (12%) (Table 5), 76% had complications (Table 6).

Table 1: Age Distribution of Participants

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-22 years	60	24.00
23-27 years	60	24.00
28-32 years	60	24.00
33-37 years	50	20.00
38-42 years	20	8.00
43-47 years	20	8.00
Total	250	100

Table 2: Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farming	30	12.00
Business (online/offline)/Entrepreneurship	120	48.00
Civil Servant	10	4.00
Craft/skill/Trade	90	36.00
Total	250	100.00

Table 3: Participants who were pregnant

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who were pregnant	190	76.00
Participants who were not pregnant	60	34.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 4: Participants who has choice of unwanted pregnancy termination

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who has choice of unwanted pregnancy termination	150	60.00
Participants who do not have choice of unwanted pregnancy termination	50	40.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 5: Reasons for choice of termination of unwanted pregnancy

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not comfortable	30	12.00
Shameful	60	24.00
May cause drop-out	70	28.00
Psychological trauma	30	12.00
Face isolation	30	12
May affect my academics	30	12.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 6: Participants who have complications

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have complications	190	76.00
Participants who do not have complications	60	34.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 7: Complications

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bleeding	150	60.00
Dizziness	30	12.00
Anaemia	30	12.00
Infection	40	16.00
Total	250	100.0

DISCUSSION

Unwanted pregnancy among female students in tertiary institutions is a significant issue with a range of causes and effects. Termination of unwanted and undesired pregnancy among female students in tertiary institutions is on the increase and this is devastating such that if not properly handle may cause havoc. Unplanned and undesired pregnancy among students expose them to emotional, social, physical and psychological trauma and thus making the students to seek for unqualified personnel in routine and unsafe environment or areas where they will not be exposed.

The study revealed the most of the participants were between the 18 and 37 years of age and majority (80%) of them were single. This idea of being single while undergoing study is a vehicle for them to engage in extra marital activities. The participants despite being students engaged themselves in various entrepreneurship and this could be the reason while unwanted pregnancy arise. The study revealed that majority (76%) of the participants were pregnant and they were not comfortable with the situation. It could be that many students enter tertiary institutions without adequate knowledge about reproductive health, contraception, and safe sex practices. Cultural or religious taboos often prevent open discussions about sex in they various communities. The participants may feel pressured from peers to engage in sexual activities to fit in or be accepted socially and rromantic relationships and the desire to prove love can also lead to unprotected sex. Again, substance use can impair judgment and lead to unprotected or coerced sex. Social events like parties or clubbing often involve alcohol, increasing risky behavior. It could be that most of the participants lack of

access to or misinformation about contraception (e.g., condoms, birth control pills) leads to unprotected sex. Also, in some areas, were these tertiary institutions are located, contraceptives are stigmatized or expensive. Financial constraints may lead some students to engage in transactional sex for money, housing, or food. The research revealed that majority of the participants seek for termination of the unwanted pregnancy in an unsafe environment and with unqualified personnel to avoid been exposed. Again, unwanted pregnancy may lead to loss of opportunities and it can also limit participation in academic programs, scholarships, internships, and extracurricular activities. Families may react negatively, leading to conflict, rejection, or lack of support and these now necessitate the participants who had unwanted pregnancy to look for an alternative to terminate the pregnancy. The pparticipants gave different reasons why they chose to terminattee the unwanted pregnancy and these reasons are: not comfortable (12%), shameful (24%), may lead to drop-out (28%), psychological trauma (12%), isolation (12%), and (12%), may affect their academics (12%). However, 76% of the participants had complications why terminating the unwanted pregnancy and the complications include bleeding, dizziness, anaemia, and infection.

CONCLUSION

Unwanted pregnancy among female students in tertiary institutions is a multifaceted issue rooted in a combination of educational, social, economic, and cultural factors. The study shows that termination of unwanted pregnancy among students of tertiary institutions is on the increase and this could be due to several factors. The study also revealed that these affected students employed the services of unqualified

personnel who carried out the process in an unsafe environment thus leading to several complications.

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