

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Community-Based Survey of Unwanted Pregnancy in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract

Unwanted pregnancy, and consequently unsafe abortion, remains major reproductive health problems in Nigeria that needs to be tackled. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of information on this problem at the community level. This study therefore examined the prevalence of unwanted pregnancy in the community as well as associated factors including the views, perceptions and attitudes of community members towards unwanted pregnancy and the pattern of help-seeking behaviour on unwanted pregnancy. Information was obtained from 3,743 women in urban and rural communities in two Nigerian states of Lagos and Edo. At some point in life, 26.6% of the respondents had had unwanted Pregnancy while abortion prevalence was 21.7%. Short birth intervals (21.1%), high cost of raising children (20.1%), interruption of education (20.1%) and being unmarried (17.3%) were the most common reasons for not wanting pregnancies. Most of the respondents (91.3%) were aware of some form of contraception but ever-use rate was only 36.6% while current use rate was 23.4%. Both abortion and contraceptive use were significantly associated with increasing levels of education. Unwanted pregnancy constitutes a problem even at the community level and more research is needed to understand the persistent disparity between contraceptive knowledge and usage, as increased usage will reduce unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2004; 8[3]:103-115)

Keywords: Community-based survey, southwestern Nigeria, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, contraception

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