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Assessment of School Connectedness and Pregnancy Susceptibility Among In-School Adolescents in a Semi-Urban Town, Nigeria

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Purpose: Although identified as an exciting period for education and skills acquisition needed for the future, teen years can be the most stressful and confusing times of life for some adolescents as many teenage girls engage in early premarital sex, which expose them to the risk of teenage pregnancies. Teenage pregnancy concern has over the years increased as prevalence rates continue to increase (Cortez, Saadat, Marinda, & Odutolu, 2016) despite efforts by government and other stakeholders through campaigns and various interventions. The school represents the second most influential environment in a child's life after the home and has been documented to either positively or negatively influence or determine the adolescent's beliefs and behaviours. School connectedness is the belief held by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals (Langford *et.al*, 2014). Understanding how the adolescent female perceive and feel connected to the school in relation to her susceptibility to unplanned pregnancy may be a needed platform for effective unintended pregnancy preventive interventions. Thus, this study aim to investigate how school connectedness relates to perceived susceptibility to teenage pregnancy among in-school female adolescents in selected high schools in a semi-urban town in Nigeria.

Methods: The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive design in which a total of 302 in-school female adolescents between the ages of 10-19 years were proportionately and randomly recruited from selected 5 public high schools. A 38-items validated questionnaire was used to collect data. Ethical clearance was obtained from Education Board of the schools and Ethical Review Committee. Informed consent was taken from the parents and assent from the participants. Data was analysed with SPSS version 23 using descriptive and inferential statistics and result were presented in tables and chart. P-value was set at a significant level of 0.05

Results: Findings from the study showed a mean age of 15.79 ± 3.61 . A summary of their perceived susceptibility to teenage pregnancy showed that a large proportion of the respondents 98.3% a perceived high susceptibility while 1.7% had a low perceived susceptibility. High connectedness to the school was however observed (62.3%) as against a value of 37.7% for low connectedness to the school. Significant association was noted between age and susceptibility to teenage pregnancy ($p=0.025$) with higher percent between ages 14-19. However, no significant association exist between their susceptibility to teenage pregnancy and school connectedness $\{\chi^2 = 0.001, df=1, p=0.982\}$.

Conclusion: The study observed high connectedness to the school, however, their level of perceived susceptibility to pregnancy is high. Therefore a multi-disciplinary,

multifaceted approach is required to tackle issue of pregnancy susceptibility by building on the school platform thus reducing teenage pregnancy in the country.

Title:

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Keywords:

female adolescent, pregnancy susceptibility and school connectedness

Abstract Summary:

School connectedness is a needed concept to be explored in the issue of adolescent susceptibility to teenage pregnancy. Its understanding is a critical platform for developing effective pregnancy reduction among adolescents. This concept was measured among female in-school adolescents in a semi-urban town in Nigeria via this study

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