

## **Sexual Violence against Male Students in selected Tertiary Institutions in Ibadan, South-West Nigeria.**

### **Abstract**

The experience of violence to men in Africa has been under-researched, because culturally it is not believed that men may be victims of abuse by women. This study determined the prevalence and factors associated with experience of Sexual Violence (SV) to male students in selected tertiary institution in Ibadan. A cross-sectional survey of 600 male students from two tertiary institutions in Ibadan, Nigeria using multistage sampling was done. Prevalence of psychologically, physical and SV were 53.9%, 62.2% and 58.3% respectively. Partners were the main (59.4%) perpetrator of SV. Approximately 18.0% victims ever sought help from following abuse. Educational level, family background, being currently in a relationship, alcohol intake, partner who smoked, partner alcohol use were significantly associated with experience of SV ( $p < 0.05$ ). Educational intervention programmes on gender based violence that target lower educational level students, particularly those from polygamous homes who smoke and drink is necessary in both institutions.

### **Introduction**

Gender based violence is a form of violence that is directed against a person on the basis of his sex. It constitutes a violation of the fundamental right to life, liberty, security, dignity, equality between women and men, non-discrimination, physical and mental integrity (EIGE, 2014). Over the last few decades there has been an increasing advocacy and programmes aimed at the improvement in human rights. However, most of these have been centered on equality and equity for women and punishment for perpetrator of violence against women. However men, as well as women may be victims of gender based violence. Men and boys are even more vulnerable because they are less likely to report experience of violence, seek redress or health care services. They experience challenges including the stigma associated with being a male victim, the perceived failure to conform to the 'macho' stereotype, the fear of not being believed, the denial of victim status, and the lack of support from society, family members, and friends. (Forge, 2007).

Yet, reports from the United States showed that an estimated 835,000 men are physically

assaulted by an intimate partner annually. One out of 14 men has been physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, boyfriend/girlfriend or date at some point in their lives and 7.6 percent reported been assaulted/raped by an intimate partner during their lifetime. (Thoennes and Tjaden, 2000). However there is a dearth of data to substantiate proportion of men affected by intimate partner violence in the less developed countries (Oladepo et al., 2011). Thus, violence against men is severely under researched in Africa.

In most African societies, cultural norms are held in high esteem, thus belief in male dominance and masculinity are strong resulting in power and economic control by men. The fact that men are abused sexually or physically by their female partner remains undetected and unreported (Kali, 2002). Thus, many men suffer in silence from intimate partner violence due to cultural norms. Unfortunately, individuals who are victims of sexual or psychological abuse are more likely to experience serious physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health complications (Stith et al., 2004).

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with population figure of about 180 million, 51.0% are males and its male life expectancy at birth is 51 years (PRB, 2014). In Nigeria, gender based violence is widely acknowledged to be of great concern, not just from a human rights perspective but also from an economic and health perspective (NDHS, 2013). However, issues and studies on gender based violence target women rather than both gender. Therefore, this study determined the prevalence and identified the factors associated with experience of sexual gender based violence to male students in selected tertiary institution in Ibadan, Nigeria. It provides empirical data on the prevalence of sexual violence to young men in Nigeria and adds to the body of knowledge on the profile of men vulnerable to gender based violence in Nigeria. It would guide programme managers and policy makers on how to end violence against boys and men.

## **Materials and Methods**

**Study area:** The study area was Ibadan. Ibadan is the capital city of Oyo State and the third largest metropolitan area (by population), in Nigeria. It has an estimated population of over 3.2 million (National population Census, 2006).

**Study setting:** This study was carried out in two tertiary institutions:- the University of Ibadan and the Polytechnic of Ibadan. Both are well established, one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in Nigeria.

**Study population:** The study population were male students who have ever been in a relationship (whether married or single). They were ordinary national degree (OND), higher national degree (HND), under graduate (UG), and post graduate (PG) students.

**Study design:** This is a descriptive cross sectional study.

**Sample size:** Sample size used was 600 respondents.

**Sampling strategy:** A multistage sampling technique was used, involving selection of students from faculties, departments and levels.

**Data collection method:** Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed from the pilot guidelines on identifying and responding to male intimate partner victimization and perpetration in health care setting (Family violence prevention fund, 2002) and the revised conflict tactics scale (Straus and Douglas, 2004). The survey took place from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014.

**Study variables:** The dependent variable was sexual violence. This variable was generated using a set of questions based on the above named instrument, The dependent variables were; educational level, family background, being currently in a relationship, alcohol intake, partner who smoked, partner alcohol use

**Data management:** Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20 at univariate, bivariate and multivariate level analysis. The univariate involved the frequency distribution of the respondents according to their background characteristics while Chi-square and binary logistic regression models were used for the bivariate and multivariate analyses respectively at 5.0% level of significance.

**Ethical consideration:** Ethical approval was granted by the Oyo State Ministry of Health Ethical Review Board, written informed consent was obtained.

## **Results**

**Socio-demographic characteristics:** Most of the respondents (67.2%) were aged 20 to 29 years while (83.3%) were single. Under graduates students were 51%, while the ordinary national diploma (OND) were 7.2%. Almost all of the respondents (78%) were Christians. Most, (62.2%)

reported were currently in a relationship.

**Experience of gender based violence:** 53.9%, 62.2% and 58.3% reported to have experienced psychologically, physical and sexual violence respectively.

**Experience of sexual violence:** Out of those who had experienced SV, 29.1% reported to have been forced to engage in kissing, while 20.8% were forced into vaginal penetrative sex and 18.6% in anal sex. About 27.0% were victimised in adulthood, 21.45% in adolescence and 12.8% in childhood.

**Perpetrator of sexual violence:** Partners were the perpetrator in 59.4% of the cases. Of these 15.4% were current, 28.9% by ex-partner and 55.7% was perpetrated by both partners.

**Health consequences and help seeking behaviour:** Only a few (5%) of respondents reported a health consequence following the victimization, 3.7% reported to have been hospitalized. Most (82.5%) of the victims did not seek help from any source.

**Factors associated with experience of sexual violence:** On bivariate analysis educational level, family type, being currently in a relationship, alcoholic intake, partner who smoked, partner alcohol use were significantly associated with experience of sexual violence ( $p < 0.05$ ). Students in the lower levels reported higher proportion of SV (81.4% for OND vs 59.1% for PG ( $p < 0.05$ ); polygamous 62.4% vs monogamous 59.1%, men currently in a relationship (63.4% vs 50.2%) who consumed alcohol (68.9% vs 53.9%); regular alcohol intake (79.3% vs 50.8%); who partners smoked (100% vs 56.7%) reported to have experienced sexual violence. On multivariate analysis, OND students were more likely to experience abuse (aOR 3.0, 95% CI 1.9-4.9) than PG, monogamous less likely than polygamous (aOR 0.4, 95% CI 0.2-0.9) and alcohol consumers more likely than non users (aOR 3.3, 95% CI 1.5-4.6).

## **CONCLUSION**

Gender based violence was a common experience among the students. Physical violence was most common followed by sexual and then psychological violence. Partners, particularly ex partners were the main perpetrator of abuse. Violence had health consequences on victims, however majority did not report their abuse to anyone. Lower educational attainment, alcohol intake, frequency of alcohol intake, smoking cigarette, type of family were factors which influenced the experience of sexual violence. There is the need for educational intervention programmes in both institutions. These programmes should target lower educational programmes, and the men from polygamous home who smoke and drink.