

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE GROUP WOMEN IN A RURAL COMMUNITY OF SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Background

Mental health is a component of reproductive health which is generally and is still not given priority in low and middle income countries. Efforts to improve women's health have tended to focus on issues associated with reproduction such as family planning and child-bearing while women's mental health has been relatively neglected. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the prevalence and predictors of mental health problems in non-pregnant reproductive age group in a rural setting of south-west Nigeria.

Methods

A community based cross-sectional survey was conducted using a cluster sampling technique to select 283 non-pregnant aged 15-49 years. Mental health was assessed based on respondents' experience of any symptoms of depression, anxiety. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect information on respondents' experience of IPV, reproductive history and factors influencing mental health. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square and multivariate logistic regression at 5% level of significance.

Results

The mean age of the respondents was 25.6 ± 7.8 years with the highest proportion (57.1%) between 15-24 years. The prevalence of depression and anxiety was 28.9% each while 19.8% had ever experienced both conditions. On bivariate analysis 80% of respondents who had miscarriage in the last 12 months and 50% of those who had family history of mental illness reported depression compared to their counterparts ($p < 0.05$). Also, higher proportion of those who were raped at sexual debut (36.1%), with gynecological conditions (45.5%) and history of miscarriage in the last 12 months (80%) had anxiety ($p < 0.05$). Respondents whose partner drank alcohol (73.2%), who were raped at sexual debut (73.8%), with low self-esteem (100%) and with gynecological conditions (77.3%) reported mental health problems ($p < 0.05$). On logistics

regression, gynecological conditions was a predictor of anxiety (OR 2.7; 95% CI 1.3-5.6) while miscarriage was a predictor of depression (OR 10.5; 95% CI 1.0- 108.8).

Conclusion

This study showed that mental health problems are quite prevalent in women of reproductive age group in the study setting. There is a need for reproductive health policies in Nigeria to recognize mental health problems as a contributor to the burden of diseases in women and integrate it into reproductive health services. There is also a need to promote public health interventions to target women who have gynecological conditions and experience miscarriage to effectively reduce the burden of mental health problems among them.

Keywords: Mental health problem, Anxiety and depression, Women of reproductive age group