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Title: Association between violence and early sexual debut among the youth in South Africa

Abstract

Violence and early sexual debut have raised global concerns and continue to be prevalent among young people. Approximately 60% of young people report to have had sexual intercourse by the time they are 16 years old. Early sexual debut is an indicator of risky sexual behaviours as it exacerbates the individuals exposure to sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV which is most prevalent among the youth in the ages 15-24 years old. Reported consequences of violence among the youth are mental health problems, mortality and a negative education outcome among young people in South Africa. The objective of this study is to examine the association between violence and early sexual debut among youth in South Africa. Using data from the National HIV communication survey the study will draw its conclusions using multinomial logistic regression model. The study will obtain results from 3399 males and females who are in their youth (15-24 years old). Data will be managed using the STATA 12. Furthermore data analysis will be carried out in a way that answers the objectives of the study. For descriptive analysis frequency tables and graphs will be used, bivariate and multivariate analysis the study will employ a chi square analysis and multinomial probit model, respectively. According to the results of the current study early sexual debut is fairly high with 62% males and 37% females reporting early sexual debut. Results of the current study show that at a significance level of 0.05 there is no association between violence and early sexual debut. Variables that show an association with early sexual debut are sex of respondent, race, level of education, place of residence, province and self-esteem.

Chapter1: Background

Early sexual debut is a world-wide concern, and it continues to garner much interest among researchers. In part, interest has been driven by the unchanging age at sexual debut which engenders high risk consequences that are evident among the youth in Sub-Saharan Africa (Pettifor, O'Brien, MacPhail, Miller & Rees, 2009). Age at sexual debut remains constant, but rates of early sexual debut keep rising in many developing countries. Previous literature has defined early sexual debut to be at 15 years and younger, this study defines early sexual debut as according to the South African sexual offences act, which prescribes the age of consensual sex to be 16 years old (Mathews et al, 2009; Pettifor et al, 2009).

High rates of early sexual initiation are also reported in Sub Saharan Africa; approximately 38% female adolescents reported to have had their sexual debut by the time they turn 15 years old (Peltzer, 2010). Furthermore due to the influence of gender norms which define successful masculinity, males also engage in sexual intercourse at a young age however males initiate sexual intercourse at younger ages than females. A study conducted in 2005 showed that young 3.5 percent of males included in the study had reported sexual debut by age 12 (Harrison, Cleland &Gouws, 2005).

The case in South Africa is no different; adolescents begin having sex at an early age. In 2005 the percentage of adolescents who had sexual intercourse by the age 15 was 6 percent for girls and 12 percent for boys; by the time they reach 18 years old, 42 % females and 63 percent males had become sexually active (Berry and Hall, 2009).

However, young people are exposed to more risk than just sexual risk. Interpersonal violence is a growing concern for youth survival and development in South Africa. Violence has been high in South Africa since the ruling of the Apartheid system, and the current rates of violence in South Africa are a legacy of the turbulent past wrought by South Africa. A characteristic of violence that has been made mention by prior research is its ability to affect those that fall victim to it that they later develop violent and antisocial behaviour (Burton and Leoschut, 2012).

Violence occurs in multiple forms, and the most prevalent kinds of violent acts in South Africa are physical assault and sexual assault. Rates of sexual violence have dropped in South Africa but remain high, in a survey administered in an antenatal clinic in Soweto it was reported that 20% of females reported sexual violence by an intimate partner; further, sexual violence against children is also a common phenomenon (Seedat et al, 2009).

For physical assault, approximately 3.5 million people seek health care for non-fatal injuries ever year. A prevailing feature of violence in South Africa is the role of young men as perpetrators and victims of violence (Seedat, et al, 2009). The highest homicide victimisation rates are seen in males aged 15–29 years at a rate of 184 deaths per 100 000 people and in some areas, for instance in Cape Town’s townships, rates are more than twice this number. Deaths of men from homicide outnumber those of women by more than 7:1 (Seedat et al, 2009).

Research shows that witnessed and experienced violence plays a role in individual’s emotional and behavioural development from childhood and beyond (Cooley-Strickland et al, 2009). For instance gender norms define successful masculinity as males having control over their female counterparts. These social norms infer that sex and condom use be initiated by men, likewise this has led to men using physical violence to establish control over their female partners. In addition sexual violence and Intimate partner violence have been reported to be the leading cause of early sexual debut in South Africa (Kaminer, Grimsrud, Myer, Stein, Williams, 2008)

1.1 Problem Statement

Early sexual debut and violence both have been identified as a risk factor for adverse health and sociocultural outcomes among youth (McGrath et al, 2009).

Approximately 50% of youth report to have initiated sexual intercourse at the age of 16, and about 80% of youth in South Africa are sexually active by the age of 20 (Eaton et al, 2003). Furthermore prior research has shown that sexual debut at an early age disposes the individual to engaging in unprotected sex and having multiple sexual partners, which both exacerbate the risk of HIV infection and unwanted pregnancy (Gupta &Mahy, 2002).

Age at sexual debut has been linked to unplanned pregnancy which inclines women to having unsafe abortions. Pregnancy among the youth, especially youth in their earlier ages, remains a serious health challenge to the survival of youth (Mchunu, 2012). Approximately 35% of pregnancies among young people aged 15-19 years old were unplanned or untimed, and about two thirds of these pregnancies result in unsafe abortions (Mchunu et al, 2012). Although termination of pregnancy at health institutions has been legalised in South Africa, these services are not easily accessed by all women due to fear of being judged by health

professionals. These women opt for alternative unsafe methods which contribute to maternal mortality and morbidity.

Moreover, early sexual initiation has significant negative effects among adolescents females education, which contribute to a lower future income and empowerment for young girls (Gupta & Mahy, 2002; Michelle, Hindin &Fatusi, 2009).

Although rates of violence have decreased since the emergence of democracy, violence still has adverse effects on the survival and development of youth in South Africa. Over 30 % of mortality in South Africa is a result of interpersonal violence, young men who are between the ages 15-29 years old are the most victimised with a prevalence rate of 184 per 100 000 men aged 15-29 years old (Seedat et al, 2009).

Further, violence among the youth leads to negative education outcome among young people in South Africa. Research has shown that school violence causes mental health problems among individuals that have been victimised. Cases of depression and fatigue has been linked to school violence in South Africa, these problems lead to absenteeism of learners impacting on school performance and ultimately leading the learners to drop out of school (Cooley-Strickland et al, 2009; Burton and Leoschut, 2012).

Sexual coercion and violence has been identified as a determinant of early sexual debut. However other forms of violence such as physical assault have not been examined in relation to early sexual debut, with rates of physical assault and early sexual debut being high in South Africa among youth. Research needs to examine the relationship between these two occurrences. Studies that have shown the link between early sexual debut and sociocultural factors such as socioeconomic status and geography of the individual, found that sociocultural factors are the leading causes of sexual coercion and violence, and multiple partnerships with older men. All which have been found to be the cause of early sexual initiation (Gupta & Mahy, 2002).

Studies have focused on linking early sexual debut and Intimate partner violence as well as Sexual violence (Peltzer, 2006). Results from these studies prove that in many instances sexual coercion, intimate partner violence and early sexual debut are related, yet no study has looked at how physical assault Secondly while studying early sexual debut many studies focus on the adolescent females, neglecting males. This study aims to examine how physical assault, working through cognitive and emotional factors such as self-esteem can be associated with age at sexual debut.

1.2 Justification.

Interpersonal violence and age at sexual debut are important factors that both have an effect on young people's development. Age at sexual debut is an indicator of risky sexual behaviour as it contributes enormously to HIV infection and unplanned pregnancy among the youth. Young people have the fastest-growing infection rates, and monitoring early sexual debut has become increasingly important for the survival of youth in the growing context of HIV/AIDS rates (Mchunu et al, 2012).

Sub-Saharan Africa faces by far the highest rate of HIV infections. Although this region accounts for only 10% of the world's population, 85% of AIDS deaths have occurred here (Eaton et al, 2003). Early sexual debut at young ages may set a precedent for future behaviours that elevate HIV risk; therefore preventative interventions may be most effective if directed at young people who are still in earlier ages (Eaton et al, 2003).

Similarly violence has been reported to be most prevalent among youth between ages 15-29 years old, and incidences of violence are reported more among males in these ages. Survival of youth is critical as they will determine the economic productivity and reproductive health. Young people are growing up in a fast changing world that offers them greater access to formal education that exposes them to increasing technology skills, job opportunities, exposure to new ideas through media, telecommunications and other avenues (Mensch et al, 2006).

It is therefore important to have a study that looks at the association between violence and early sexual debut as research has shown that both factors can be detrimental to the survival of youth if they are unmonitored. Interventions such as Life orientation as part of the curriculum at schools and The love life 'National Parent campaign', are an important strategy in trying to delay the age at which young people start to have sexual intercourse (Harrison et al, 2010). The current study looks at how the survival of youth in South Africa is compromised, by examining whether there is an association between violence and early sexual debut among young people who are the future leasers, parents and main source of revenue for South Africa.

1.3 Research Question

What is the relationship between violence and early sexual debut among youth in South Africa?

1.4 Research Objectives

To examine the association between violence and early sexual debut among youth in South Africa.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the levels of early sexual debut among youth in South Africa
2. To examine the relationship between physical violence and early sexual debut controlling for other socio-economic and demographic factors.

1.5 Definition of terms:

Early sexual debut: An act of engaging in sexual intercourse at any age that is below 16 years old. As supported by the sexual offenses act (Act 32, 2007) in South Africa. The law prescribes the age of consensual sex as 16 years. Anyone who has sex with anyone below this age will be considered to have committed statutory rape.

Unintended pregnancy: A pregnancy that is mistimed, unplanned, or unwanted at the time of conception (Tsui, McDonald-Mosley and Burke, 2010)

Adolescence: Is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development, its defined age is generally 10-19 years; it is a critical transitional phase to adulthood.

Youth: In South Africa, youth are defined as individuals who fall between 14-35 years old. This is based on the mandate of the National Youth Commission Act 1996 and the National Youth Policy 2000 (National youth policy 2014-2019). However for the purpose of the study, youth will be defined as individuals who fall between the age group 16-24 years old.

Interpersonal Violence: The use of physical force, against another person, that ultimately results in injury or death (Norman, Bradshaw, Schneider, Jewkes, Mathews, Abrahams, Matzopoulos, Vos, 2007)

Literature Review.

There are over one billion adolescents living in the world, 70% of whom live in developing countries and over 60 % of youth in Africa have engaged in sexual intercourse by the time they are 18 years old (Hindin and Fatusi, 2009). Youth who begin early sexual activity are more likely to have high-risk sex or multiple partners and are less likely to use condoms.

Therefore determining average age at sexual debut is a key feature of identifying the extent to which the context of sexual risk can be changed to reduce the incidence of HIV, unwanted pregnancies, and other social problems that arise from early sexual initiation. Identifying trends in the timing of sexual debut also provides guidance on what interventions need to be implemented (Zuma et al, 2011).

However diverging views about age at sexual debut have emerged, in the midst of all of this Mensch et al (2009) emphasises that, what is most important to observe is the context at which adolescents have sexual intercourse. Mensch et al (2006) argues that Age at first sex hasn't necessarily changed, however what has changed is the context in which young people have sex. In colonial times traditional societies encouraged early marriage, premarital sex was frowned upon, and the rationale for this was to preserve the name of the families preservation of girls' virginity and limit children born out of wedlock as Mensch et al, 2009 maintains that early teenage sexual debut isn't necessarily a consequence of late age in marriage, but premarital sex is a problem which gives rise to risky sexual behaviour among young people.

Today adolescents are growing up in circumstances quite different from those of their parents; prevalence of sexually transmitted illness is much higher in the present day. Risky sexual behaviour creates a platform for unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted illness due to people not having sex within the confines of marriage, and as a result multiple sexual partners are easily tolerated (Mensch et al, 2006).

First sexual experiences are part of the transition to adulthood, and they are influenced by the environment, context and culture in which young people develop. Studies conducted among South African adolescents in the 1990s and early 2000s described gender norms that contextual surroundings of adolescents can have a profound effect on their sexual attitude and practices, defined successful masculinity as having multiple sex partners, and that deemed using physical and sexual violence to establish control over female partners as acceptable behaviour (Varga, 2003).

Economic development of a country provides fertile ground for early sexual debut, Development and increase in education encourage autonomy among young people, reducing parental control over them. Some researchers have considered poverty to be a root cause of early sexual debut. Due to this male and female adolescent alike engage in transitional sex (Mensch et al, 2006).

Lam et al (2013) adds that educational attainment has a negative and positive effect on adolescents' sexual behaviour. Due a high number of grade repetition among black South Africans , students remain in high school up to the age 20. At that age most black students are already sexually active, this implies that although educational attainment has been suggested to delay sexual initiation, students become sexually active while they are still in school due to the time period spent by the learner at school and the peers they are surrounded by (Lam et al, 2013).

On the other hand school enrolment is a buffer against individuals having sexual intercourse at an early age, due to the capacity to enhance knowledge and skills in schools; however school can also be a place of conflict and a place where learners are socialised to undesirable behaviours (Lam et al, 2013).

The school staff and peers each play an important role in young people's schooling experience and in how the experiences will be relevant for subsequent transition into adulthood. This is concurrent to findings that being exposed to individuals of older age group that is sexually active might encourage adolescents to become sexually active while still in school, thus diminishing the protecting role that schools supposedly play in delay sexual intercourse among young people (Lam et al, 2013).

Grades completed ahead of an individual's age have a significantly positive effect on sexual debut. This implies that adolescents who are a grade ahead of their peers are more likely to engage in sex at an earlier age; this supports the previous author, as the students spend most of their time with older peers who are possibly sexually active (Lam et al, 2013).

Adolescents' place of residence influences the age at sexual debut. Adolescents who live in rural areas engage in sexual intercourse much earlier than those who live in urban areas. However adolescents who live in urban adolescents, indicated more frequent sex, due to external motives for the first sexual intercourse which are propelled by their peers and in most cases they have sexual intercourse under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol (Peltzer, 2006).

Pelzter, (2006) investigated the association between the length of time lived in an urban area and selected adolescents' risk behaviour in black communities in the Cape Peninsula, and found also that alcohol and cannabis use were associated with urbanisation. Urban Zulu communities suggested that fertility was an integral part of the cultural construction of the female self. The cultural importance of female fertility has also been cited as a primary

reason for adolescent sexual intercourse and nonuse of contraceptives. With regard to male adolescents, for young Zulu men, early fatherhood is a welcome affirmation of masculine maturity and strength (Pettifor, 2006).

Early sexual initiation is a result of socially constructed norms; Social norms that define successful masculinity as having multiple sexual partners and this impels using physical and sexual coercion to establish control over females as acceptable behaviour (Pettifor et al, 2009).

Early sexual debut and sexual violence are two factors that are heavily influenced by cultural sexual norms and it is due to this reason that early sexual debut is often forced. In addition also females who experience childhood sexual abuse are more likely to experience first consensual sex earlier than their peers who do not experience childhood sexual abuse due to the lasting cognitive and emotional effects the sexual abuse had on them.

Physical violence is high in South Africa, especially violence against females, over 40% males have disclosed to having been violent towards a woman. patriarchal social norms influence the use of violence by men to discipline and control female partners, and so long as boundaries of severity are not transgressed, violence is viewed as socially acceptable.

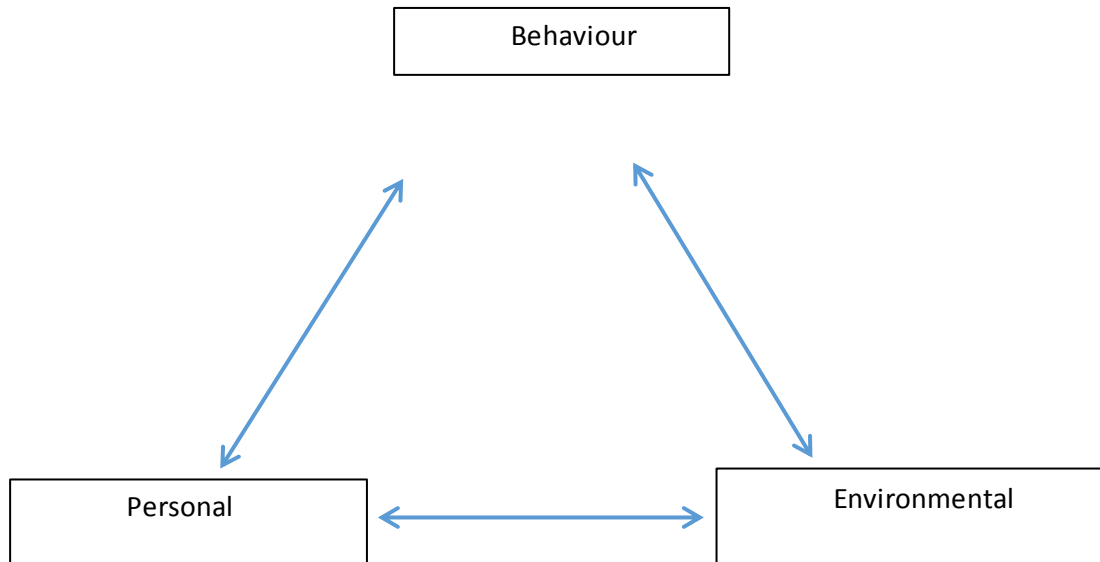
Poverty and inequality are crucial social dynamics that have contributed to the extent of violent behaviour prevalent in South Africa (Seedat et al, 2009). They are inseparably related to other key drivers such as the dominant patriarchal constructions of masculinity, as well as alcohol, and drug misuse (Seedat et al, 2009). Violence and poverty are both a factor of apartheid and unequal distributions that were present under the apartheid ruling. Since then, income inequality low economic development, and high levels of gender inequity have become strong positive predictors of rates of violence, including homicides and major assaults (Seedat et al, 2009).

Theoretical framework

The Social cognitive theory was adapted from the Social learning theory by Bandura in 1986. Social cognitive theory posits that learning is a flexible that takes place in a social context, and is influenced by a reciprocal causation between behaviour, cognitive and personal influences and environmental influences. It is worthy to note that the different factors do not have the same strength, some factors may be stronger than others. Furthermore the social cognitive theory considers how the individuals ability to influence their own behaviour and

environment through self-reflection, self-regulatory processes, thus maintaining and regulating their own behaviour (Bandura, 1986).

Below is a diagram depicting how the environmental, behavioural and personal factors work together in a triad process.



Source: Bandura (1986) Social cognitive theory

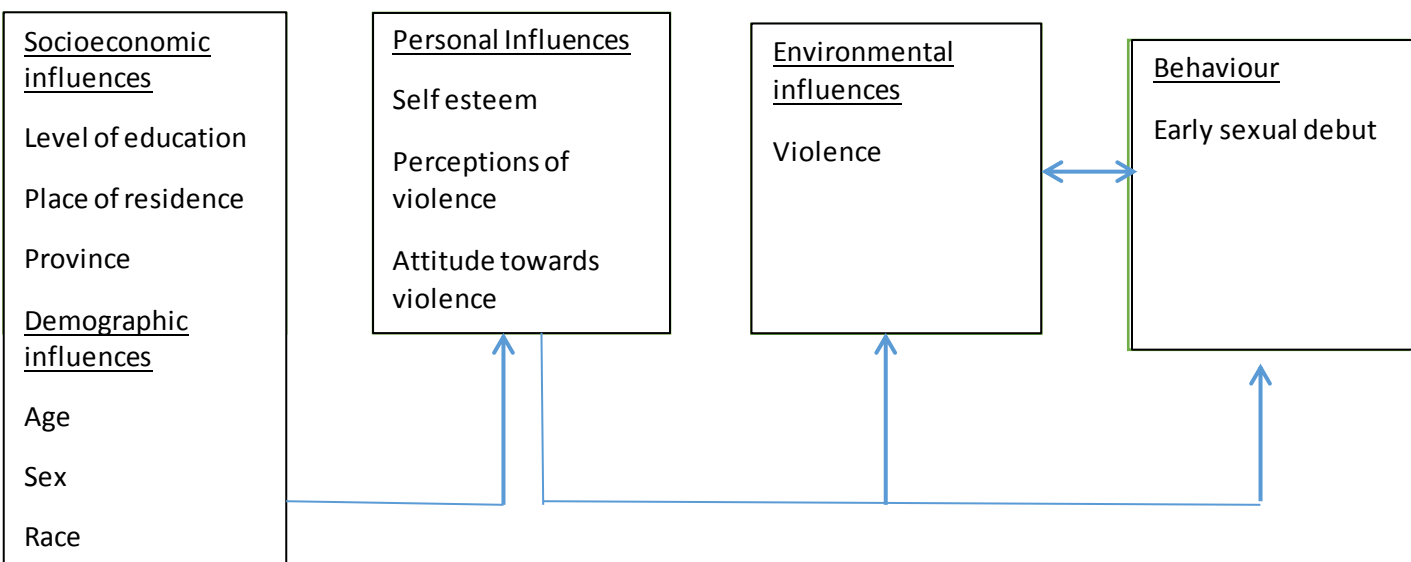
Correspondingly the current study will look at how personal and cognitive influences and environmental factors influence the individual's behaviour.

Conceptual framework

The study will use an adapted framework from the Social cognitive theory, due to the nature of the current study; a few important aspects must be taken into account. The adapted framework will show pathways going in a linear and a reciprocal direction, ultimately working together to influence the behaviour. Secondly as literature has shown socioeconomic and demographic factors are unavoidable predictors of early sexual debut, thus the study will show the role played by the socioeconomic and demographic pathways (Gupta & Mahy, 2002).

The direction that this framework will take is that the socioeconomic and demographic factors work together to influence the personal and cognitive influences which will have a

direct influence on the environmental influences (which is violence) and the behavioural factors. Furthermore it is worthy to note that the environmental and behavioural pathways will work in a reciprocal direction in the current study.



Source: Adapted from Bandura (1986) Social cognitive theory.

Methodology:

The methodology section will give an overview of the process followed in aiding the study to obtain results.

3.2 Study Design

The study will utilise a cross sectional study from the National Communication survey 2012. Data collection was conducted in three stages, the first stage were the Statistics South Africa sub places which were the PSUs. The second stage involved selecting households within the PSU stage three involved the selection of eligible individuals from within the households to be interviewed using the KISH Grid method (The Third National HIV Communication Survey, 2012)

3.2.2 Study Population and sample size.

The study population are males and females between the ages 16-24, and the overall sample size of the current study is 8 876 223 males and females

3.2.4 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to enable it to measure the respondent's key characteristics, which may have an effect on how responsive the respondents are to HIV communication, exposure to HIV campaigns, risk behaviours as well as care and support behaviours (The Third National HIV Communication Survey, 2012).

3.3.1 Dependent Variable

The variable will be used as a categorical, with three main categories. The categories will be as follows: The first category will be individuals who had early sexual intercourse; this category will have ages ranging from 0-15 years. Category two will be those who had sexual initiation at a normal age, and will be composed of individuals who had sexual initiation between the ages 15-19 years old and the last group will be individuals who fall within the age groups 20-24 years old.

Outcome variable	Type of variable	Description
Age at sexual debut	Categorical	1) Early sexual debut (0-15 years) 2) Sexual debut at 16-19 years. 3) Sexual debut at 20-24 years.

3.3.2 Independent Variables

<u>Predictor variable</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>Main predictor variable</u> Violence	1) Yes 2) No

<p><u>Socioeconomic variables</u></p> <p>Level of education</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) No education 2) up to primary school 3) up to secondary school 4) up to tertiary.
<p>Province</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gauteng 2) North west 3) Kwa Zulu Natal 4) Limpopo 5) Free state 6) Mpumalanga 7) Northern Cape 8) Western Cape 9) Eastern Cape
<p>Place of residence</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Urban 2) Rural
<p><u>Demographic variables</u></p> <p>Age</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 16 2) 17 3) 18 4) 19 5) 20 6) 21 7) 22 8) 23 9) 24
<p>Sex</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Male 2) Female

Race	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Black 2) Coloured 3) White 4) Indian 5) Other
<u>Personal</u> Self-esteem	"I have a positive attitude towards myself" <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Disagree 2) Agree

3.4 Hypotheses

H0: There is no association between violence and early sexual debut among youth in South Africa

HA: There is an association between violence and early sexual debut among youth in South Africa

3.5 Ethical Issues

Data collected for the study is secondary in nature; the data used was collected by Health Development Africa. The current study does not carry any personal details of respondents and in this way anonymity is ensured.

3.6 Data Management

Data will be managed using the STATA 12, which is statistical software that is used for analysing and describing data.

Data analysis

The data analysis will be carried out in a way that will answer the objectives of the study. To answer objective 1, this is to determine the levels of early sexual debut among the youth in South Africa. Frequency tables will be used to describe the level of early sexual debut among the youth in South Africa.

In answering objective 2 which aims to examine the relationship between physical violence and early sexual debut controlling for other socioeconomic and demographic factors the study will use a chi square test which will cross tabulate the frequencies of age at sexual debut and violence as both variables are categorical (Treiman, 2009).

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

The chi square is calculated by the formula:

At multivariate level the study will use a multinomial logistic regression model which is an extension of a binary logistic regression. Multinomial logistic regression model is suitable when the dependent variable is categorical and has more than two categories. The reference category of the study will be 'sexual debut at the age of 20-24 years old' category; using this statistical technique the study will establish the log-odds of an individual having early sexual debut. Multinomial logistic regression assumes a linear relationship between the logit of the IVs and DV, and does not assume a linear relationship between the actual dependent and independent variables. More assumptions of the model are:

- Assumes a large sample
- Independent variables are not linear functions of each other
- Normal distribution is not necessary or assumed for the dependent variable.
- Homoscedasticity is not necessary for each level of the independent variables
- Normally distributed description of errors are not assumed.
- The independent variables need not be interval level

Multinomial probit regression model is calculated using the following equation:

$$P_{ij} = \frac{e^{X_{ij}\beta + Z_i\delta_j}}{\sum_{k=1}^J e^{X_{ik}\beta + Z_i\delta_k}}$$

Where;

i = cases

J=categories

k = independent variables

(Treiman, 2009)

Chapter 4 Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

The following chapter presents the results of the study. The results are presented in a way that answers the objectives of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of select demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Figure 4.1: Percentage distribution of age at sexual debut among youth in South Africa, 2012

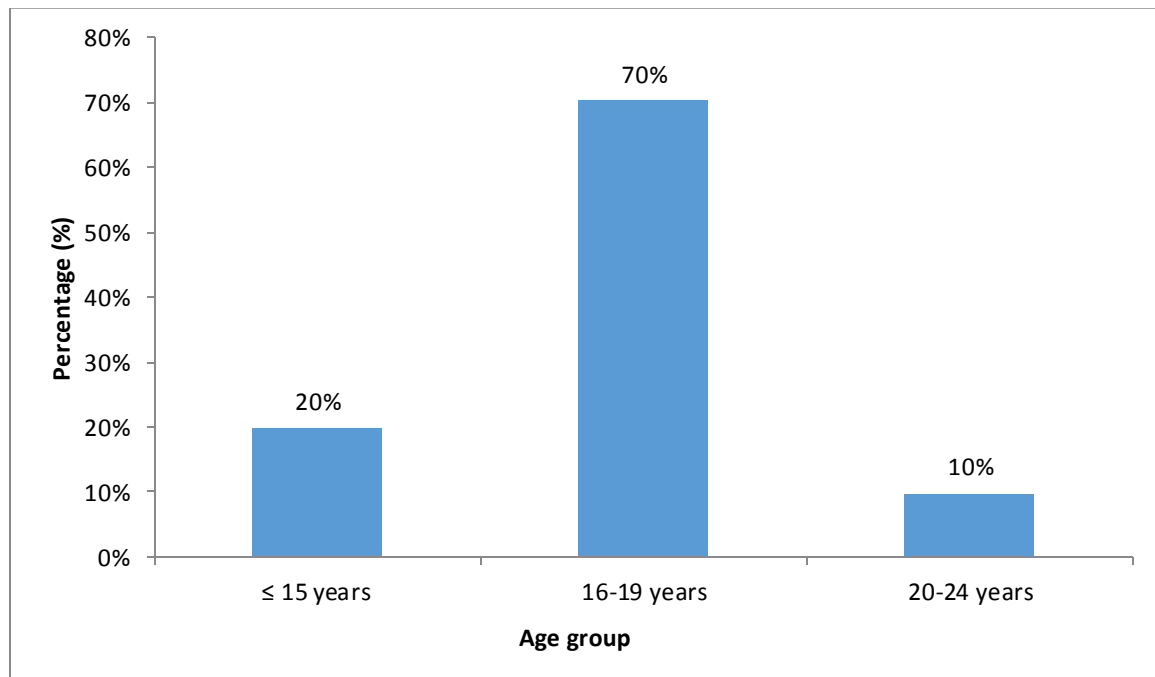


Figure 4.1 above shows the percentage distribution of age at sexual debut. The percentage distribution of age at sexual debut indicates that only 20% of the respondents reported to have engaged in sexual debut before the age of 16 while 70% initiated sexual intercourse between the ages 16-19 years old.

Figure 4.2: Percentage distribution of violence experienced among youth aged 16-24 in South Africa, 2012

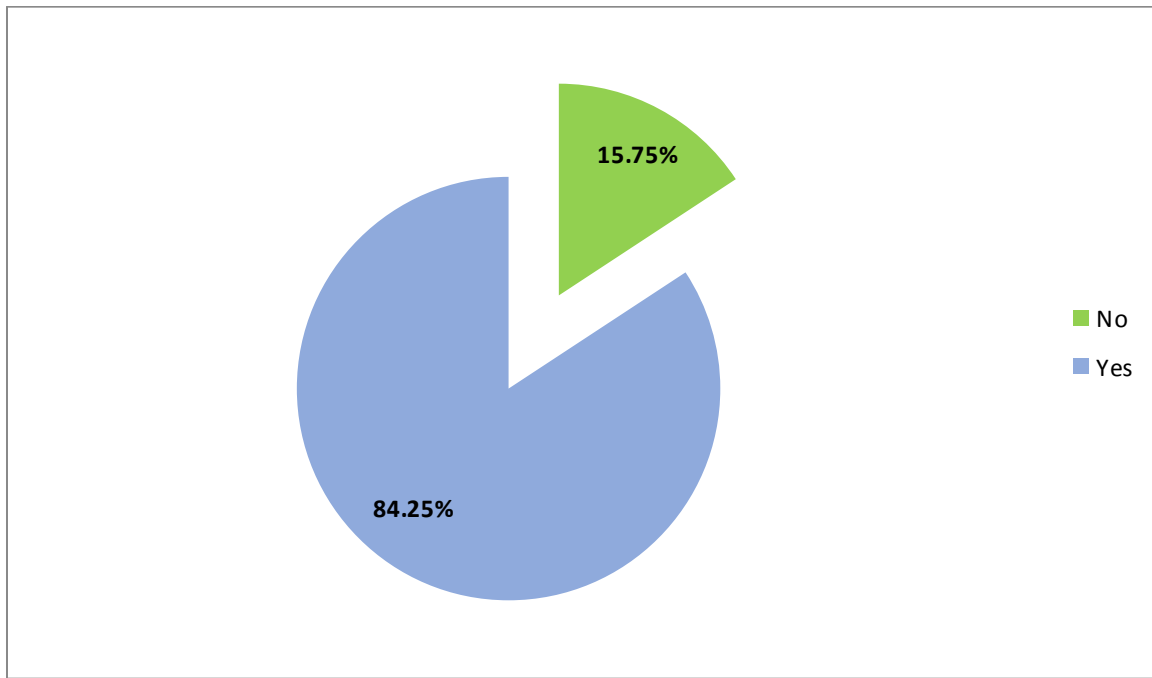


Figure 4.2 shows the percentage distribution of violence among youth in South Africa. The results show that 84.25% had experienced violence, while 15.47% of the respondents reported to never experienced violence.

Table 4.1 Weighted frequencies and column percentage distribution of age at sexual debut by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of youth aged 16-24 years, South Africa, 2012

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Sexual debut		
Sexual debut between before 16 years old	1142738	19.92
Sexual debut between 16- 19 years old	4031 308	70.27
Sexual debut between 20-14 years old	562 544	9.81
Total	5 736 635	

<u>Violence</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	670566	84.25
No	125 383	15.75
Total	796 255	
Sex		
Female	3080376	53.70
Male	2656259	46.30
Total	5 736 635	
Race		
Black	471 5148	82.19
Coloured	535 6537	9.34
White	435 930	7.60
Indian	49 900	0.87
Total	5 736 635	

<u>Level of education</u>		
No schooling	331 668	1.51
Primary education	2 336 544	10.66
Secondary education	15 869 644	72.4
Tertiary education	3 379 254	15.42
Total	5 736 635	
<u>Place of residence</u>		
Rural	2 276 513	39.68
Urban	3 460 122	60.32
Total	5 736 635	
<u>Province</u>		
Western Cape	278	12.40
Eastern Cape	266	11.86
Free State	157	7
Gauteng	451	20.12
KwaZuluNatal	480	21.41
Limpopo	245	10.93
Mpumalanga	175	7.94
North West	146	6.51
Northern Cape	41	1.83
Total	5 736 635	
<u>Age</u>		
16	90 678	1.58
17	187 240	3.26
18	452 365	7.89
19	642 190	11.19
20	873 504	15.23
21	833 270	14.53
22	919 781	16.03
23	917 290	15.99
24	820 310	14.30
Mean age	21	
Total	5 736 635	100

Furthermore, when examining demographic characteristics of the respondents, 82.19% of the respondents are black; followed by Coloured population (9.34%), White population (7.60%) and the minority was comprised by the Indian population (0.87%).

Furthermore most respondents were female (53.70%) followed by male respondents (46.30%).

Socio-economic characteristics indicate that youth who had a secondary education form the largest population (72.4%), followed by those with tertiary education (15.42%), among the lowest are those with primary education (10.66%) and no schooling at 1.51%

Urban residents had the highest percentage (60.32%), while rural residents had a lower percentage (39.68%).

Highest percentage are people from Gauteng (23.69%), followed by KwaZulu Natal (21.41%), followed by Gauteng residents (20.41%) Groups with the lowest percentage are people who live in the North West and the Northern Cape (6.5% and 1.83% respectively).

Table 4.2: Frequency and percentage distribution of age at sexual debut by demographic characteristics of youth aged 16-24 years, South Africa, 2012.

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Sexual debut <16 years old</i>	<i>Sexual debut between 16-19 years</i>	<i>Sexual debut between 20-24 years</i>
Violence			
No	49 839 (20.65)	70 590 (14.10)	4 954 (9.12)
Yes	191 467 (79.35)	430 047 (85.90)	49 358 (90.88)
Total	241 306 (100)	500 637 (100)	54 312 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Self-esteem			
Disagree	71 777 (6.28)	198 687 (4.93)	19 548 (3.47)
Agree	1 070 700 (93.72)	3 832 621 (95.07)	542 996 (96.53)
Total	1 142 783 (100)	4 031 308 (100)	562 544 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Demographic variables			
Race			
Black	1 017 694 (89.08)	3 255 808 (80.76)	441 646 (78.51)
Coloured	102 061 (8.93)	102 367 (8.96)	42 393 (7.54)
White	13 747 (1.20)	351 142 (8.71)	71 041 (12.63)
Indian	8 975 (0.79)	33 461 (0.83)	7 464 (1.33)
Total	1 142 783 (100)	4 031 308 (100)	562 544 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Current age of the respondent			
	25 th percentile	50 th percentile	75 th percentile
16-19 years old	16.5 years	18.5 years	19 years
20-24 years old	20.5 years	22.5 years	23 years
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Sex			
Female	432 984 (37.90)	2 266 714 (56.23)	380 372 (67.62)
Male	703 (62.10)	1 764 594 (43.77)	182 172 (32.38)
Total	1 142 783 (100)	4 031 308 (100)	562 544 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Socioeconomic variables			
Level of education			
No education	0 (0.00)	12 814 (0.32)	3 030 (0.54)
Primary education	71 352 (6.25)	130 764 (3.24)	18 075 (3.21)
Secondary education	987 423 (86.43)	3 455 630 (85.72)	431 940 (76.78)
Tertiary education	83 702 (7.33)	432 100 (10.72)	109 499 (19.46)
Total	1 142 783 (100)	4 031 308 (100)	562 544 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Province			
Western cape	144 583 (12.66)	485 205 (12.04)	49 777 (8.85)
Eastern cape	178 787 (15.65)	469 953 (11.66)	57 172 (10.16)
Free state	86 033 (7.53)	211 246 (5.24)	33 809 (6.01)
Gauteng	260 291 (22.78)	973 015 (24.14)	125 911 (22.38)
KwaZulu Natal	211 576 (18.52)	814 677 (20.21)	130 628 (23.22)
Limpopo	103 069 (9.02)	403 074 (10)	57 934 (10.30)

Mpumalanga	96 569 (8.45)	284 127 (7.05)	47 841 (8.50)
North West	55 496 (4.86)	306 187 (7.60)	43 501 (7.73)
Northern Cape	6 073 (0.53)	83 824 (2.08)	15 971 (2.84)
Total	1 142 783 (100)	4 031 308 (100)	562 544 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			
Place of residence			
Rural	501 039 (43.86)	1 587 430 (39.38)	187 938 (33.37)
Urban	641 438 (56.14)	2 443 878 (60.62)	374 806 (66.63)
Total	1142 783 (100)	4031 308 (100)	562 544 (100)
<i>Pvalue<0.05 (0.000)</i>			

Table 4.2 above shows the cross tabulated percentages of early sexual debut by select demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in South Africa. At a pvalue of 0.000, all of the predictor variables have a significant association to age at sexual debut.

The percentage distribution of violence indicates that 79.32% of youth who had early sexual debut reported to have experienced violence, while 20.68% reported no violence. Furthermore 85.90% of youth who initiated sexual intercourse between the ages 16-19 reported to have experienced violence while 14.10 reported no violence. Lastly, 90.88% of youth who initiated sexual intercourse in the age group 20-24 years, reported to have experienced violence, while 9.12% reported no violence.

When examining the socio-economic characteristics; the province percentage distribution of early sexual debut demonstrates that Gauteng has the largest percentage of youth who initiated sexual intercourse before the age of 16 (22.78%) followed by Kwa Zulu Natal (29%). This is followed by the Eastern Cape (15.65%), Western Cape (12.66%), Limpopo (9.05%), Mpumalanga (8.45%) and North West. The Northern Cape constitutes 0.53% of early sexual debut. Furthermore at 24.04% Gauteng has the largest percentage of youth who initiated sexual intercourse between the ages 16-19 years. This is followed by KwaZulu Natal (20.21%), Western Cape (12.04%), Eastern Cape (11.66%), Limpopo (10%), North West (7.60%), Mpumalanga (7.05%) and Free State (5.24%) while Northern Cape constitutes (2.08%) of youth who have initiated sexual intercourse in the age group 16-19 years old.,

KwaZulu Natal holds the largest percentage (23.22%) of youth who initiated sexual intercourse in the age group 20-24 years. This is followed by Gauteng (22.38%), Limpopo (10.30%), Eastern Cape (10.16%), Western Cape (8.85%), Mpumalanga (8.50%), North West (7.73%) and Free State (6.01%), while Northern Cape has the lowest percentage (2.84%).

The table further shows that urban area has the largest percentage of youth who initiated sexual debut in ages younger than 16 years (56.14%), followed by youth from rural areas (43.86%). Furthermore 60.62% of youth who initiated sexual intercourse in the age group 16-19 years, reside in an urban area, while 39.38% reside in a rural area. Lastly urban area contains the largest percentage of youth who have reported to have initiated sexual intercourse in the age group 20-24 years; this is followed by young people from rural area.

In addition, 86.43% of youth who had early sexual debut have up to secondary education, followed by tertiary education (7.33%), primary education (6.25%) and there was no one who reported no education. Furthermore 85.72% of youth who had reported sexual debut at 16-19 years old have secondary level of education, followed by youth with tertiary level education (10.72%), and primary education (3.24%) while those with no education constitute 0.32%. Lastly, youth who have a secondary level education constitute 76.78% of youth who reported sexual debut at 20-24 years old; this is followed by youth with tertiary level education (19.46%), primary level education and those with no education constitute 0.54% of youth who reported sexual debut at 20-24 years old.

When examining the demographic characteristics majority of the youth are black (89.08%) followed by coloured population (8.93%), white population (0.79%) and Indian population comprises the lowest percentage (0.79%). Moreover the largest percentage of youth who reported sexual debut at 16-19 years old are young people from the black population (80.76%). This is followed by the Coloured population (8.96%), the White population

(8.71%) and Indian population constitutes 0.83%. Lastly 78.51% of youth who reported sexual debut at 20-24 years old are from the black population, followed by the White population (12.63%), the Coloured population (7.54%) and finally Indian people constitute 1.33%.

The mean age of those who reported sexual debut before 16 year is 20 years, secondly the mean age of those who reported sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years is 21 years and lastly those who reported sexual debut at the ages 20-24 years have a mean age of 22 years.

Furthermore most young people who reported sexual debut before the age of 16 are male (62.10%) and female (37.90%). The results further show that 56.23% of youth who reported sexual debut between the ages 16-19 are female, while 43.77% are male. Moreover 67.62% of youth who reported sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years are female, while males constitute 32.38%.

Table 4.2 further shows that 93.72% of young people who reported sexual debut before the age of 16 have high self-esteem, while 6.28% indicate low self-esteem. Secondly, those with a high self-esteem have the highest percentage of youth who reported sexual debut at age 16-19 (95.07%), while those with a reported low self-esteem constitute 4.93%. Finally 96.53% of youth who reported sexual debut at 20-24 years old have a high self-esteem, while those with a low self-esteem constitute 3.47%

Table 4.2 above shows the cross tabulated percentages of early sexual debut by select demographic and socio-economic characteristics of youth in South Africa. The percentage distribution of violence indicates that 79.32% of youth who had early sexual debut reported to have experienced violence, while 20.68% reported no violence.

When examining the socio-economic characteristics; the province percentage distribution of early sexual debut demonstrates that Gauteng has the largest percentage of youth who initiated sexual intercourse before the age of 16 (22.78%) followed by Kwa Zulu Natal

(29%). This is followed by the Eastern Cape (15.65%), Western Cape (12.66%), Limpopo (9.05%), Mpumalanga (8.45%) and North West. The Northern Cape constitutes 0.53% of early sexual debut. Furthermore 56.14% of the youth are from an urban area, while 43.86 are from a rural area.

In addition, 86.43% of youth who had early sexual debut have up to secondary education, followed by tertiary education (7.33%), primary education (6.25%) and there was no one who reported no education.

When examining the demographic characteristics majority of the youth are black (89.08%) followed by coloured population (8.93%), white population (0.79%) and Indian population comprises the lowest percentage (0.79%).

Furthermore most young people who reported early sexual debut are male (62.10%) and female (37.90%), even though there were more female respondents than male respondents in the study.

Table 4.2 further shows that 93.72% of young people reported to have high self-esteem, while 6.28% indicate low self-esteem.

Table 4.2 Unadjusted Multinomial logistic regression showing individual predictor variables and age at sexual debut, South Africa, 2012.

Sexual debut	Coefficient	P>z	95% Confidence Interval
Sexual debut before 16 years old			
Violence (No)			
Yes	-0.41871	0.535	-1.740566 - 0.903145
Province (Northern Cape)			
Western cape	0.894143	0.015	0.172291 - 1.615994
Eastern cape	0.123718	0.745	-0.621223 - 0.868658
Free state	0.007809	0.979	-0.586499 - 0.602118

Gauteng	-0.350361	0.229	-0.921528 - 0.220805
KwaZulu Natal	-0.212944	0.529	-0.876537 - 0.450648
Limpopo	0.4114	0.312	-0.385448 - 1.208248
Mpumalanga	0.130686	0.761	-0.710649 - 0.972022
North West	-0.649472	0.230	-1.709358 - 0.410413
Level of education (Primary education)			
Secondary education	-0.838227	0.065	-1.72792 - 0.051466
Tertiary education	-1.552789	0.002	-2.549747 - -0.55583
No education	-15.09972	0.985	-1627.601 - 1597.402
Race (Black)			
Coloured	0.061151	0.817	-0.456538 - 0.57884
White	-1.890951	0.102	-4.160707 - 0.378804
Indian	0.817099	0.457	-1.336873 - 2.971071
Sex (Female)			
Male	1.12341	0.000	0.779792 - 1.467028
Place of residence (Rural)			
Urban	-0.167751	0.339	-0.511647 - 0.176144
Self esteem			
Agree	-0.567647	0.140	-1.320841 - 0.185548
Age	-0.556383	0.000	-0.656307 - -0.45646
Sexual debut between 16-19 years			
Violence (No)			
Yes	-0.242468	0.709	-1.516242 - 1.031306
Province (Northern Cape)			
Western cape	0.419426	0.218	-0.248241 - 1.087093
Eastern cape	-0.167634	0.622	-0.834792 - -0.83479
Free state	0.037851	0.887	-0.48465 - -0.48465
Gauteng	-0.26932	0.286	-0.764377 - -0.76438
KwaZulu Natal	-0.174191	0.554	-0.750463 - -0.75046
Limpopo	0.339262	0.355	-0.380263 - -0.38026
Mpumalanga	0.264218	0.486	-0.478844 - -0.47884
North West	-0.921406	0.044	-1.820066 - -1.82007

Level of education (Primary education)			
Secondary education	-0.1249847	0.776	-0.9845174 - 0.734548
Tertiary education	-0.5630546	0.235	-1.492103 - 0.365994
No education	-0.7735883	0.518	-3.121891 - 1.574715
Race (Black)			
Coloured	0.144455	0.537	-0.314516 - 0.603425
White	-0.42663	0.506	-1.682931 - 0.829671
Indian	0.671982	0.517	-1.362536 - 2.706501
Sex (Female)			
Male	0.378326	0.016	0.06966 - 0.686991
Place of residence (Rural)			
Urban	-0.095929	0.539	-0.402245 - 0.210387
Self-esteem (Disagree)			
Agree	-0.237448	0.508	-0.941027 - 0.46613
Age	-0.449273	0.000	-0.54188 - -0.35667

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 0.894 times higher for living in Western Cape relative to the Northern Cape

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 0.894 times higher for living in Western Cape relative to the Northern Cape

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 1.55 times lower for tertiary education, relative to primary education

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 1.12 times higher for males, relative to females

For a unit change in age, the logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to initiating sexual intercourse at 20-24 years old is expected to decrease by 0.55 units

The multinomial logit for sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 0.921 times lower for living in North West relative to the Northern Cape

The multinomial logit for sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 0.378 times higher for males, relative to females.

For a unit change in age, the logit for sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years relative to initiating sexual intercourse at 20-24 years old is expected to decrease by 0.44 units

Table 4.3 Adjusted Multinomial logistic regression showing individual predictor variables and age at sexual debut, South Africa, 2012.

Sexual debut<16 years old	Coefficient	pvalue	95% Confidence Interval	
Violence (No)				
Yes	-0.5412029	0.477	-2.03245	0.9500446
Province (Western Cape)				
Eastern Cape	-1.143916	0.487	-4.36888	2.08105
Free State	-1.892137	0.237	-5.02941	1.245135
Gauteng	-1.843258	0.186	-4.5739	0.8873825
KwaZulu Natal	-3.157014	0.026	-5.94346	-0.370568
Limpopo	-4.848872	0.006	-8.28405	-1.413694
Mpumalanga	-2.246344	0.209	-5.75075	1.258061
North West	10.4526	0.99	-1591.15	1612.053
Northern Cape	11.92604	0.995	-3830.54	3854.396
Level of education (No education)				
Primary education	0.1174145	0.905	-1.80771	2.042537

Secondary education	-0.9735443	0.391	-3.19619	1.249099
Place of residence (Rural)				
Urban	-1.199786	0.189	-2.98893	0.5893619
Self-esteem (Disagree)				
Agree	0.4145005	0.755	-2.18652	3.015516
Race (Black)				
Coloured	-1.193562	0.212	-3.06638	0.6792593
White	14.48187	0.995	-4282.69	4311.656
Indian	13.81999	0.995	-4243.75	4271.387
Sex (Female)				
Male	1.408461	0.014	0.290247	2.526675
Age	-0.4583439	0.003	-0.75942	-0.157266
Sexual debut between 16-19 years old				
Violence (No)				
Yes	-0.0351791	0.961	-1.45799	1.387633
Province (Western Cape)				
Eastern Cape	-1.092059	0.496	-4.2326	2.048482
Free State	-2.894613	0.063	-5.94397	0.1547415
Gauteng	-2.251779	0.095	-4.89441	0.3908485
KwaZulu Natal	-2.819993	0.038	-5.48354	-0.156451
Limpopo	-4.567786	0.006	-7.81577	-1.319807
Mpumalanga	-2.817248	0.104	-6.21474	0.5802483
North West	10.71	0.99	-1590.89	1612.31
Northern Cape	11.35257	0.995	-3831.12	3853.822
Level of education (No education)				
Primary education	1.629174	0.106	-0.34425	3.602595
Secondary education	0.4893888	0.661	-1.69852	2.677295
Place of residence (Rural)				
Urban	-0.8978908	0.303	-2.60538	0.809594

Self-esteem (Disagree)				
Agree	-0.2736005	0.83	-2.7759	2.228702
Race (Black)				
Coloured	-1.570521	0.084	-3.35198	0.2109373
White	13.12763	0.995	-4284.05	4310.301
Indian	13.6983	0.995	-4243.87	4271.265
Sex (Female)				
Male	0.9710416	0.071	-0.0834	2.025483
Age	-0.3566733	0.016	-0.64744	-0.06591
Sexual debut 20-24 years old	Base category			

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 3.15 times lower for living in KwaZulu Natal relative to the Western Cape

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 4.84 times lower for living in Limpopo relative to the Western Cape

The multinomial logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 1.40 for males, relative to females.

For a unit change in age, the logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to initiating sexual intercourse at 20-24 years old is expected to decrease by 0.45 units

The multinomial logit for sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 2.81 times lower for living in KwaZulu Natal relative to the Western Cape.

The multinomial logit for sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years old relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is -2.817 times lower for living in Limpopo relative to the Western Cape

The multinomial logit for sexual debut between the ages 16-19 years relative to sexual debut between the ages 20-24 years is 1.408 for males, relative to females.

For a unit change in age, the logit for sexual debut before the age of 16 years relative to initiating sexual intercourse at 20-24 years old is expected to increase by 0.35 units.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter will present the discussion of the paper based on results achieved through the objective of the study. The aim of this chapter is to apply meaning to the results obtained in the previous chapter.

The purpose of the study was to examine the association between violence and early sexual debut among youth. To achieve this, the study used the unadjusted and adjusted multinomial logistic regression, controlling for select socio-economic and demographic factors. The unit of analysis are youth in South Africa aged between 16-24 years old.

Sexual debut and violence are prevalent issues that pose a threat to the survival and development of youth in South Africa. One of the objectives of the study was to determine the levels of early sexual debut among youth in South Africa, and results from frequency tables indicate that the majority of youth included in the study did not report sexual initiation before the age of 16 years old, as could have been expected, however a large percentage (70.27%) of youth initiated sexual intercourse between the ages 16-19 years old. Although the focus of the study was youth who initiated sexual debut before the age of 16 years old, the results show that initiating sexual intercourse during adolescence (late adolescence) is prevalent among youth in South Africa.

Furthermore violence is high as 84.25% of the youth reported to have experienced violence these results coincide with results from other literature; According to Seedat et al (2009) violence in South Africa is high and attributes the reason for high rates of violence to South Africa's history of violence during apartheid. Seedat (2009) further adds that the current rates of violence are a legacy of the past. Poverty and inequality are crucial social dynamics that have been maintained since the ruling of apartheid, and have contributed to the burden of

violence and injuries in South Africa. Although incidences of violence and injuries are said to be high, official statistics still do not explain the full extent of the problem. Norman et al, (2007) further adds that deaths from injuries have been ranked as the third leading cause of death in South Africa, following deaths from HIV/AIDS and cardiovascular disease (Norman et al, 2007).

Results further indicated that although the study had more females than males, 62.10% of males reported to have initiated sexual intercourse below the age of 16, leaving females to only 37.90% this finding is concurrent with Pettifor et al, 2009 which found that more males tend to initiated sexual intercourse earlier than girls, in his study Pettifor found that 50% of males age 15-19 had reported sexual debut before the age of 16 and 47% of females in the same age group reported sexual debut before 16 years old. However young people's sexuality is propelled by their contexts and literature from other parts of Sub Saharan Africa defies findings from South Africa. For instance in many African countries girls are given away for marriage at early ages; this is driven by societal expectations which perpetuate sexual debut at early ages for more females (Pettifor et al, 2009). Significant rates of early sexual debut have also been reported in Sub-Saharan Africa. In many African states child marriage has played a significant role in early sexual initiation; ages at which adolescents are given away for marriage range from 13-20 years old (Peltzer, 2010)

According to the results from the current study, majority of all sexually active youth are Black Africans (89.08%), followed by Coloureds (8.93%), White (1.20%) and Indians (0.79%). Anderson et al, 2007 argues that racial groups are important predictor of risky sexual behaviour and is often overlooked. The stark difference in percentages of early sexual debut can be viewed as result of the different cultural traditions and gender norms in the different racial groups.

The mean age of the study was 21 years overall. This age is slightly higher than the age reported in previous literature. A study conducted in South Africa indicated that which found that the median age for sexual debut in South Africa was 18.5 and 19.2 years for females and males respectively (McGrath, 2009). This finding coincides with results from another study in South Africa which found that the mean age of sexual debut in South Africa is 18 years. Results from both studies are evidence that age at sexual debut has remained constant through the years (Pettifor et al, 2009)

The provincial characteristic of youth indicated that the majority youth who had early sexual debut are from Gauteng (22.78%) followed by Kwa-Zulu Natal (18.52%) with Northern Cape constituting 0.53% of youth who reported early sexual debut. However, in a study conducted in six provinces in South Africa, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng, Northern Cape, Western Cape and Northern Province found that sexual assault was the highest in Eastern Cape 97% male and 90% female, followed by the Western Cape 87% male and 69% female and while Gauteng has the lowest percentage of youth who have reported early sexual debut 38% male and 23% female (Kelly and Ntlabathi, 2002). This finding is in stark contrast to this study's finding which found that Gauteng constituted the highest percentage of early sexual debut.

Furthermore 56.14% of the youth are from an urban area, while 43.86 are from a rural area. Previous literature has found that place of residence is a predictor of age at sexual debut. However results obtained in the study are different to what had been previously reported. Young people who live in rural areas engage in sexual intercourse much earlier than those who live in urban areas. However adolescents who live in urban adolescents, indicated more frequent sex, due to external motives for the first sexual intercourse which are propelled by their peers and in most cases they have sexual intercourse under the influence of drugs and alcohol (Peltzer, 2006).

Results on violence from the study show that 79.35% of youth have reported to have experienced violence, while a small portion (20.65%) of the participants reported to have not experienced violence.

The variables were further calculated at a multivariate adjusted and unadjusted level. The results show that the odds of violence, level of education, place of residence, self-esteem and race were not statistically significant predictors of early sexual debut. The study further found that province, sex and age were significant predictors of early sexual debut.

Although previous literature has established a link between sexual violence, as well as intimate partner violence and early sexual debut among youth in South Africa, the results of the study show that physical violence is not a significant predictor of early sexual debut among youth in South Africa.

This is a work in progress.

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