International Journal Dental and Medical Sciences Research
Volume 6, Issue 6, Nov - Dec 2024 pp 228-233www.ijdmsrjournal.com ISSN: 2582-6018

Choice of Treatment of Unwanted Pregnancy among Young Ladies in Rural Areas of South-South

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Submitted: 15-11-2024 Accepted: 25-11-2024

ABSTRACT
Pregnancy could be wanted (desired) or unwanted base on the stage of life the involves find herself and the state of economy at the time the pregnancy happened. In recent times many young women both married and single involves in sexual intercourse without telling their spouse or boyfriend to put on protective device and thus leading to unwanted pregnancy.And because the pregnancy came as a surprise without proper planning and no finance they decided to abort or terminate the pregnancy through herbal medicine. The aim of the study is to ascertain the Choice of Treatment of Unwanted Pregnancy Among Young Ladies in Rural Areas of South-South. This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 married women who were within the age of 18 to 47 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the Research Assistants. The study lasted for a period of 3 months. Statistical analysis of data was done using SPSS Version 25 and P value < 0.05 was considered significant for data. The study revealed that majority (32.0%) of the participants were between 28-32 years of age and 60.0% had primary level of education, 60% are famers. The study revealed that 76.0% of the women weresingle, 95.0%, 20.0% were married and do not use protective device during sexual intercourse and 80.0% are pregnant. The findings shows that 80.0% of the participants have choice of pregnancy termination and 80.0% employed herbs in terminating their pregnancy. They gave reason for the choice and this include: comfortability (8.0%), stress less (32.0%), cheap (8.0%), accessible (36.0%), available (20.0%), and while 12.0% said the process is hidden. The study also revealed that 96.0%of the women said their community have no primary health centre, 88.0% of the participants said their community allow termination of unwanted pregnancy, 85.0% terminate their unwanted pregnancy, 60.0% of them had complications which are bleeding (36.0%), dizziness (4.0%), anemia (40.0%), and infections (20.0%).

Keywords: Choice, Treatment, Unwanted Pregnancy, Women, Rural Areas

I. INTRODUCTION

Reproductive process is an important activity that women of reproductive age engaged in at different levels of relationship (Gbaranor, et al., 2022).

Pregnancy is an important process that every married women desire to pass through in

their matrimonial homes and it is a planned and desire one. Getting pregnant as a single and as a student will virtually hinder academic's progression. Desired conception is when both couple agree to bear children, based on favourable conditions (Gbaranor et al, 2020). However, unwanted pregnancy is an untimely, unplanned and undesired pregnancy that could occur in a single lady, married couple, divorced and co-habitual partners.

Unwanted pregnancy in married couple could be due to certain factors like, unexpected sexual intercourse, economic, medical, epidemic, academic pursuant, famine and cultural factors (Gbaranor, et al., 2022).

Unintended pregnancy has several adverse outcomes (Adhikari et al, 2009) and from these adverse outcomes, unsafe abortion is a major outcome which could cause infection, haemorrhage, reproductive organ perforation, infertility and even death (Sedgh et al, 2014). Previous study shows that inability to use contraceptive methods such as condoms, oral contraceptives, injections, implants and Intrauterine Devices (IUD) was associated with unintended pregnancy (Cherie et al. 2018). Also, study carried out by Ma et al, (2008) revealed that having multiple sexual partners, non-use of condom and non-consensual sex and sexual intercourse before high school were the potentiating factors of unintended pregnancy (Ma et al, 2008). Study carried out in Western Uganda disclosed that side effects, stigma associated with contraceptives, cost, lack of contraceptive varieties, partner refusal, lack of contraceptive knowledge, and unplanned sexual encounters are major obstacles to contraceptive use among both in-and out-of-school adolescents (Uganda Ministry of Health, 2010).

Unintended intercourse is the primary cause of unwanted pregnancies in Nigeria, and many women with unwanted pregnancies from unintended intercourse decide to end them by abortion. (Otoide et al, 2001). Study carried out by Oye- Adeniran et al., (2004), revealed a prevalence rate of unwanted pregnancy of 26.6% and abortion prevalence of 21.7% (Oye-Adeniran et al, 2004). However, abortion is illegal in Nigeria (unless medically recommended to save a mother's life), many abortions are carried out in an unsafe environment (Abiodun and Balogun 2009). The aftermath of these secrete abortions are grave and can be life-threatening, often leading to maternal death (Oye-Adeniran et al, 2004; Abiodun and Balogun 2009; Oriji et al, 2009).Unwanted pregnancy occurs in women of all ages but adolescents have been most affected (Oye-Adeniran et al, 2004; Adewole et al, 2002). Previous study revealed that by the age of 45 years most women would have had at least one abortion (Henshaw et al, 1998; Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1999). Married women also experience unwanted pregnancy, as they constituted 34.8% and 63.2% of abortion seekers in studies carried out in Southwestern Nigeria. (Oye-Adeniran et al, 2004).Unplanned pregnancy gives a multiplicity of problems for students and academic institutions. Through study revealed that, the costs incurred, when a student's academic life is disrupted due to an unplanned pregnancy is much (Naidoo and Kasiram, 2006).

Previous study, revealed possible determinants of unwanted pregnancy include intermittent unprotected sexual intercourse, low level of education, lack of awareness about contraceptive use, unfavourable timing of pregnancy, lack of family planning centres and our data revealed that majority of the participants (67%) had unprotected sexual intercourse intermittently resulting in an unwanted pregnancy. Contraceptives device play a vital role in regulating or spacing pregnancy and the need for adequate awareness about methods of contraception (Gbaranor, et al., 2022).Unwanted pregnancy in married couple could be due to certain factors like, unexpected sexual intercourse, famine, academic pursuant, economic, medical and cultural factors (Gbaranor, et al., 2022). Also, study by Gbaranor, et al., (2022) revealed that the effects of the unwanted pregnancy include untold hardship owing to the fact that the pregnancy was not planned. Studies revealed that participants who were still cohabiting and has not initiate the process of proper and legitimate marriage were stigmatized, and some end up terminating the unwanted pregnancy in an unqualified environment resulting in infection, profuse bleeding, and death (Gbaranor, et al., 2022).

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 married women who were within the age of 18 to 47 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the Research Assistants. The study lasted for a period of 3 months (February to April, 2024). Statistical analysis of data was done using SPSS Version 25 and P value < 0.05 was considered significant for data.

Area of the Study

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The study was carried out in the South-South zone. It comprises six states – Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, CrossRiver, Delta, Edo, and Rivers.

Population of the Study

The target population of this study consisted of females in rural areas of South-South, Nigeria age between 18–47 years.

III. RESULTS

The results of age distribution of participants shows that 10(4.0%) were between the age of 18-22 years, 70(28.0%) were between the age of 23-27 years, 80(32.0%) were between the age of 28-32 years, 50(20.0%) were between the age of 38-42 years, 30(12.0%) were between the age of 38-42 years and10(4.0%) were between the age of 43-47 years (Table 1). The results revealed that 150(60.0%) had primary education, 70(28.0%) had secondary education, and 30(12.0%) had tertiary education (Table 2 below). Also, results of the respondents revealed that 150(60.0%) were into farming, 50(20.0%) business, 10(4.00%) civil service, while 40(16.05) were students (Table 3 below) and 190(76.0%) were single, 50(20.0%) were married, while 10(4.0%) were divorced (Table 4 below). Eighty percent 200(80.0%) of the respondents were pregnant, 200(80.0%) have choice of treatment (Table 5), and 200(80.0%) choses herbs, 10(4.0%) choses health centre, and choses 40(16.0%) chemists' stores (Table 6). The participants gave different reasons for termination of unwanted pregnancy shows that 20(8.00%) attributed it to comfort, 80(32.00%) stress less, 20(8.0%) cheap, 90(36.0%) accessible, 50(20.0%) available, while 40(12.0%) said is confidential (Table 7), 220(88.0%) said their community allow termination of unwanted pregnancy, 240(96.0%) said their community do not have health centre,150(60.0%) have complications, and these were various complications faced by the participants, 90(36.0%) have bleeding, 10(4.00%) dizziness, 100(40.0%) have anaemia, and 50(20.00%) have infections.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Participants

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-22 years	10	4.00
23-27 years	70	28.00
28-32 years	80	32.00
33-37 years	50	20.00
38-42 years	30	12.00
43-47 years	10	4.00
Total	**250**	**100.0**

Table 2:Educational Distribution of Participants

Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary education	150	60.00
Secondary education	70	28.00
Tertiary education	30	12.00
Total	**250**	**100.0**

Table 3:Occupational Status of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farming	150	60.00
Business	50	20.00
Civil Service	10	4.00
Student	40	16.00
Total	**250**	**100.0**

Table 4:Marital Status of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	190	76.00
Married	50	20.00
Divorce	10	4.00
Total	**250**	**100.0**

Table 5: Percentage of participants who have choice for termination of unwanted pregnancy

International Journal Dental and Medical Sciences Research
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Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have choice of pregnancy termination	200	80.00
Participants who do not have choice of pregnancy termination	50	20.00
Total	**350**	**100.0**

Table 6: Choice for termination of unwanted pregnancy

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Taking herbs	200	80.00
Health centre	10	4.00
Chemists' store	40	16.00
Total	**250**	**100.00**

Table 7: Reasons for choice of termination of unwanted pregnancy

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Comfortable	20	8.00
Stress less	80	32.00
Cheap	20	8.00
Accessible	90	36.00
Available	50	20.00
Not exposed	40	12.00
Total	**250**	**100.0**

IV. DISCUSSION

Termination of unwanted pregnancy is on the increase among young ladies in rural areas probably because they were not ready or expecting the pregnancy at the time the pregnancy occurs and this has become a threat to some of them due to the method and the environment used for the process. In some African culture, termination of unwanted pregnancy is a taboo and this have minimized among unmarried couples.

The findings revealed that majority (32.0%) of the participants were between 28-32 years of age and means that they were sexually active.This signifies that termination of unwanted pregnancy among young sexually active ladies is on the increase especially in the rural settings. The results shows that 60.0% of the rural ladies who participated in the study had primary level of education and 60.0% of them were into farming. This means that their level of education is limited and they do not embark on further study to get more education. And because they do not get more education, they are not enlightened on sex education, thus, the involves themselves in unprotected sex that may result unwanted pregnancy. It is believed that when you get more education, you become more civilized and know what to do at the appropriate time. Majority of the participated ladies are single and this could be the basis where unwanted pregnancy is eminent. And because they are single and not yet married, they tend to protect themselves from being a laughing and humiliated. In most African culture, given birth to a child without a recognize father is not welcome and the child will not be well placed or respected among his/her peers.

The research revealed that majority (80.0%) of the participants got pregnant and 80.0% of them have their choice of terminating the unwanted pregnancy because they were single and still believe to get marriage in future.The results revealed that the participants have the following as their choice of terminating unwanted pregnancy they include: taking herbs (80.0%), Health Centre, 10(4.0%) and 16.0% uses Chemists' stores. And because they have their preferred choice of terminating their unwanted pregnancy, this could be the reason why they involve in unprotected sex regularly without taking into cognizance the aftermath of involving in unprotected sex. The use of herbs as their preferred method of treatment in the rural areas is on the increase and this study shows that majority of the participated young ladies uses herbs as their preferred method of terminating the unwanted pregnancythey acquired. This study is in consonant with previous that revealed that majority (96.20%) of the participants preferred herbal medicine as their treatment choice. This choice of treatment by the participants could be due to the fact that herbal medicine is accessible,

available, affordable and also proximity of treatment centre (Gbaranor, et al., 2023). The study revealed that majority of the people who live in the rural areas depend of herbal medicine for treatment of various ailment including STI (Gbaranor, et al., 2023). And this also agreed with previous studies by Gbaranor et al, (2023) that revealed that, most people in the rural areas and some in the urban areas depends on herbal medicine each time they have medical issues, WHO, whose report, revealed that 60% of the world's populations depend on herbal and traditional medicine, and 85% of the world's developing countries use traditional medicine in caring for diseases (Shuaib, M. et al, 2023).

Again, the participants involved in terminating their unwanted pregnancy using herbs as their preferred choice, probably because they are young, single and desire to get marriage in future. Also, these participants are in their young and are sexually active and thus engages in unprotected sex leading to unwanted pregnancy.

However, this scenario could be attributed to low educational level, little or no enlightenment campaign, no awareness about the effect of terminating an unwanted pregnancy by herbs and no sex education. This study has shown that herbs is the most common and available means of treatment among the rural dwellers.The participants gave reasons why they opted for herbs as their preferred choice of terminating pregnancy and these reasons include: Comfort (8.0%), stress less (32.0%), cheap (8.0%), accessible (36.0%), available (20.0%), and (12.0%) said the process is not exposed (confidential). This study also agreed with previous study by Gbaranor, et al., (2023), that revealed the reasons given by the participants to choose their treatment choice as availability (15.40%), accessibility (23.10%), and (61.50%) said it is cheaper.

Also, from the research, the participants revealed that their community allow termination of unwanted pregnancy and this is again the norms and culture of most communities in Africa in those days and also, majority of them (96.0%)do not have Health Centre in their communities. This freedom in their various communities and the absent of a functional Health Centre could be one of the reasons why they embark on terminating of unwanted pregnancy using herbs. However, majority of the young ladies who terminated their unwanted pregnancy, using herbs have complications and this becomes a problem among them and the complications the encountered include: bleeding, dizziness, anaemia, and infections.

V. CONCLUSION

The use of herbal medicine in the treatment of unwanted pregnancy among young ladies in the rural areas is on the increase and this is due to the extinction of traditional laws and absent of functional Health Centre in their various communities across South-South Geopolitical zone. The study revealed that majority of the participants used herbs as their preferred choice of terminating their unwanted pregnancy with Comfortability, stress less, cheap, accessibility, availability, andconfidentiality as the reasons that lured them into using herbs as their preferred choice. The study also revealed various degree of complications from terminating their unwanted pregnancy using herbs was recorded during and after the process.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge Nazor Barinua-Gbaranor, Nuazor Victory Barinua, Kedumle Success. Barinua, Tuamene Excellent Barinua and Excellent Support Global Foundation for their moral support, prayers, understanding, and encouragement during the period of this research.

Funding: No funding.
Conflict of Interest: None declared.
Ethical Approval: Not required.

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