

P1.3. Violence against Young Female Sex Workers In Abuja, Nigeria · TA Dagunduro, University of Ibadan, Nigeria; **OI Fawole**, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
E-mail: fawoleo@yahoo.co.uk

Background/Significance: The sex work in Nigeria points to a fundamental injustice in the current materialist world order. It is an indication of a global willingness to sacrifice society's most vulnerable members for the sake of other economic and sexual gratifications. The truth is that with the involvement of the adolescents in prostitution, their future is been mortgaged. Violence against women (VAW) is a major public health problem affecting women globally. In addition to causing injuries and eroding self esteem, it increases women's risk of reproductive health problems especially HIV/AIDS and STIs. Put women at risk of physical injury depression and post traumatic stress disorder. Violence presents an increased burden on the health system, causes a drain on the economically productive workforce and generates a climate of fear and insecurity. Unfortunately sex work is treated as a crime, making the sex workers vulnerable to violence with little help from the legal system and law enforcers.

Methodology: A cross sectional survey of 66 brothel-based female sex workers (FSW) was conducted using interviewer administered questionnaire. In addition to In-depth interview of 5 FSW to document prevalence and correlates of sexual violence. Brothels were stratified based on the socio-economic status into (High class =21, Middle class =12, Low class=33) and simple random sampling was used to select brothels to be interviewed. All the female sex workers of age between 15-24 years who consented for interview. Data were analyzed using SPSS Software Package.

Findings: The age of the female sex workers ranged from 15-24years, mean age was 22 years (S.D+2.1). Seventy four percent had at least secondary education, 84.8% were single and 15.2% were married, 49% had at least one child. Most (71.2%) were aware of violence against women, the sources of information were the television/radio (34.9%), bill board/newspaper (33.3%) and from co-sex workers (25.8%). Those who never married had better knowledge of violence against women than the married ones ($p < 0.05$).

Knowledge was positively associated with level of education ($p < 0.05$). Eighty percent of the respondents had been sexually abused when they were at the age range of 8-12 years. The perpetrators included were family friends (30%) and neighbours (12 %). Prevalence of violence six months preceding the survey was 51.5%. Episodes of abuse ranged from one to five times and 49.9% had more than three episodes in the last 6 months. The types of violence experienced were physical violence 30%, sexual violence 50%, physiological violence 5% and economic violence 15%. The main perpetrators were clients (47%), brothel owners (30%), police (3%), and local thugs (20%). The major health consequences experienced by the victims were physical injury 22.7%, infected with HIV infection, other STIs 28.8% and unplanned pregnancy 19.7%. About 70% of the respondents refuse to stop sex work because of lack of employment 30%, sexual urge 20% and 50% easy source of money. For those who want to stop of sex work 65% will like to go back to school, while 35% will like to start a business. When violated 40% did nothing because of the fear of discrimination and stigma, 30% reported to their brothel leaders and gather co sexworkers to deal with the perpetrators and 5% reported to the police officers. About 45.7% accessed health facilities for treatments while 37% went to the herbalists and 3% nongovernmental organizations after been violated. Logistic regression analysis showed that respondents between 15-19 years were more likely to experience physical violence than the older FSW (OR= 2.4, 95%CI= 1.34-4.25). FSW in the lower class brothels were more likely to experience sexual violence than the higher classes (OR=1.24, 95%CI= 0.24-0.78). FSW with no formal education were also more likely to be vulnerable to economic violence than those with at least secondary education ($p < 0.05$)

Knowledge Contribution: There is high prevalence of violence to young female sex workers, with risk of transmission of (STIs) and HIV. Interventions to reduce prostitution among female adolescent and youths and empower them educationally and economically are urgently required.