

ABSTRACT

Context: Heterosexual transmission has been found to be the major route of HIV infection in Nigeria. Thus prevention of HIV infection by reducing risky behaviors has been identified as a public health priority. This study examines regional pattern and correlates of gender differences in HIV risk behaviors among Nigerian youths aged 15-24 years. As different geo-political regions have specific gender ideologies and practices, there is need to find out if gender differences in Nigeria regions drive HIV risk behaviors among youths.

Method: Data from the 2003 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey were analyzed for never married, sexually experienced 342 males and 630 females. Multiple sex partnerships and pattern of condom use were the HIV risk behaviors examined. Respondents were asked the number of sexual partners in the last 12 months while pattern of condom use is a composite variable of four items in the 2003 NDHS. Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were done using STATA 9.5E. Binary and multinomial logistic models were used for multivariate analyses.

Results: The study shows that there is high level of risk behaviours in the population. This cuts across gender and regions. For instance, 54% of males and 69% of females engage in inconsistent condom use and 30% of males and 9% of females in multiple sex partnership. This pattern is consistent across the regions.

It is also shown that while correlates of HIV risk behaviours vary by gender, its regional variation by gender is inconsistent. The study highlights inconsistent gender differentiation by regions. Further investigation is necessary to explain this observation.