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DETERMINANTS OF ADOLESCENT SEXUAL ACTIVITY
IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study of the determinants of adolescent sexual activity was necessitated by the increasing concern it is currently receiving from the Society, Researchers and Government of Nigeria because of its associated problems. In this thesis the genesis of the present determinants was traced to the breakdown of the traditional sexual system after colonialism. In order to study these determinants, 1678 cases of adolescents 15 to 19 were selected from 8781 women aged 15 to 49, in a National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) data collected representatively throughout the country in 1990. The study employed univariate, bivariate and multivariate techniques for data analyses.

Throughout the course of analysis, special attention was given to unmarried adolescents, being the cynosure of the growing concern expressed above. At the bivariate level analysis, of all the determinants considered--- residence, region, education, religion, knowledge and attitude towards

contraceptives, source of information on contraceptives and socioeconomic status, only religion and socioeconomic status were not significantly associated with sexual activity. The situation changed as the policy indicative prowess of multivariate analysis came to play and reduced these determinants to only the most influential ones as follows:- Age of adolescents; Knowledge and attitudes towards use of contraceptives; and source of information (peer group) on contraceptives.

These outcomes sharpened policy and program recommendations as follows-- that parents be made to appreciate their children's sexuality and the need to provide them with necessary information according to their age; that health professionals should work with teachers in schools to develop training schedules and the skills for this; that the most popular in peer groups be identified along side those who volunteer and trained on family life and sex education, who should in turn educate their friends; that units be created within existing family planning clinics around the country to take care of adolescent sexual problems and that programs enunciated should have the full backing and commitment from the government and her organs.