

## **Influence of Birth Control on Reproductive Health problems among Students in the Colleges of Health Technology in North West Senatorial District of Benue State**

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### **Abstract**

*The study is aimed at determining the influence of birth control on reproductive health problems among the students in Colleges of Health Technology in the North West Senatorial District of Benue State. A cross sectional research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 1400 was purposively selected and used for the study. Data was generated through research design questionnaire. The data obtained was analyzed using frequency counts, mean and percentages for descriptive statistics while chi-square and SPSS was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Two research questions and hypotheses were used for the study findings revealed that unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) do influence the birth control on reproductive health problems among students. It was therefore recommended that adequate health promotion workshops be organized for the female students on birth control methods and enough experience health workers be posted in the Colleges for dissemination of family planning information.*

**Keywords:** Influence, students, reproductive health, family planning, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy

### **Introduction**

One of the major reproductive health problems among teeming populating reproductive age is birth control and its attendance complications. The concept of birth control, contraception and family planning encompass the physical, psychological, genetic and theological concerns of individuals or couples regarding Reproduction. It also involves seeking solutions to infertility, controlling when pregnancy occurs and voluntarily interrupting pregnancy. Birth control or contraception generally refers to the methods employed to avoid or space pregnancies (WHO, 2010). Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN, 2013) launched Birth Control programme on Reproductive Health with the primary aim of promoting and encouraging the health of students in the Colleges of Health Technology to space birth and have children when desired in order to achieve formal education in higher institutions of learning.

Lack of birth control among students on reproductive health leads to unwanted pregnancies, exposure to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, addition of financial expenses to family members and inadequate meal for the teeming population including nutritional diseases (Kunle, 2008). These problems lead to school dropout, child abandonment, abortion and even death. All these factors affect the students directly or indirectly during training period including members of their families (Singh, 2002). It is as a result of this that the influence of birth control on reproductive health problems among students in the Colleges of Health Technology in North-West Senatorial District of Benue State gave rise to the research work.

The investigated influence of birth control on reproductive health problems among students in the Colleges of Health Technology within North West Senatorial District of Benue State. The research specifically investigated:

- i. The influence of unwanted pregnancies on reproductive health among female students of Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.
- ii. The influence of sexually transmitted infections on reproductive health problems among students of Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.

It is believed that when students employ the two methods of birth control with good public health education, cases of unwanted pregnancy and transmission of sexual transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS will reduce among students.

### Research questions.

- i. Does birth control and reproductive health influence unwanted pregnancies among female students of Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State?
- ii. Does birth control and reproductive health influence sexually transmitted infections among students of Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State?

### Hypotheses.

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- i. Unwanted pregnancies will not be significantly influenced by birth control and reproductive health among female students in the Colleges of Health Technology in North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.
- iii. Sexual transmitted infections (STIs) will not be significantly influenced by birth control and reproductive health among students of Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State?

### Method

This study employed the cross-sectional research design. The sample consists of 1400 students drawn from the three Colleges of Health Technology within North West Senatorial District of Benue State. The 1400 students consisted of both male and female students.

Experts in test and measurement in the field of Health Education; University of Nigeria Nsukka validated the self-constructed questionnaire. The instrument was piloted using 90 students from the Colleges of Health Technology in Zone A. The scores obtained from the responses were used to calculate the reliability of the instrument on computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Cronbachalpha gave a value of 0.75. This was considered high enough for the study. The researcher and a research assistant visited the three Colleges of Health Technology and a good rapport was created between the staff and students.

The researcher and a research assistant administered the questionnaire through the lecturers teaching family planning in those colleges within four weeks. This ensured that every student filled the questionnaire. The data was collected, coded and analyzed. Frequency counts and percentages were used. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistics was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

Table 1

#### Responses to Birth Control and Reproductive Health Problems as Influencing Unwanted Pregnancies

| S/N | Variables                         | SA           | A            | D           | SD          | $\mu$  |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| 1.  | Reduces unwanted pregnancy        | 680<br>49.5% | 610<br>43.2% | 60<br>4.3%  | 50<br>3.6%  | 3.194  |
| 2.  | Use of diaphragm                  | 800<br>57.6% | 500<br>35.9% | 50<br>5.59% | 40<br>2.87% | 3.5146 |
| 3.  | Non-acceptance of barrier methods | 900<br>64.7% | 400<br>28.7% | 60<br>4.3%  | 30<br>2.2%  | 3.3786 |
| 4.  | Delays continue academic          | 850<br>61%   | 450<br>32.4% | 50<br>3.6%  | 40<br>2.8%  | 3.2209 |
| 5.  | Non-compliances lead to abortion  | 700<br>50.4% | 600<br>43.2% | 50<br>3.6%  | 40<br>2.8%  | 3.2201 |
|     | Cluster Meant                     |              |              |             |             | 3.3036 |

Table 2

**Responses on birth control and reproductive health problems as influencing sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**

| S/N          | Variables  | SA            | A            | D          | SD         | $\mu$  |
|--------------|--|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------|
| 1.           | Reduces the spread of STIs                                 | 820<br>58.9%  | 490<br>35.2% | 55<br>3.9% | 25<br>1.7% | 3.1812 |
| 2.           | Condom reduces STIs  | 700<br>50.4%  | 600<br>43.2% | 50<br>3.6% | 40<br>2.8% | 3.4337 |
| 3.           | Common STIs are gonorrhoea etc                             | 780<br>56.1%  | 520<br>37.4% | 50<br>3.6% | 40<br>2.8% | 3.3301 |
| 4.           | Sick bays care for complications                           | 900<br>64.7%  | 400<br>28.7% | 60<br>4.3% | 40<br>2.8% | 3.6916 |
| 5.           | Health education by public health officers<br>Reduces STIs | 1000<br>71.9% | 320<br>23.0% | 40<br>2.9% | 30<br>2.2% | 3.2168 |
| Cluster Mean |  |               |              |            |            | 3.3917 |

In order to address the two research questions of the study, the score of 2.50 representing the mean score of each item of the modified summation score was used as a cut-off point for determining the influence of each variable on reproductive health problems among students of Colleges of Health Technology in Benue North-West Senatorial District. The results are presented in table 3 below:

Table 3

**Mean analysis of unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection on Reproductive Health among students**

| S/N | Variable                       | Cluster Mean | Remark      |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1.  | Unwanted pregnancy             | 3.30         | Significant |
| 2.  | Sexually Transmitted Infection | 3.39         | Significant |

Table 3 above showed that the mean score of unwanted pregnancy of birth control and Reproductive Health among students of Colleges of Health Technology in Benue North-West Senatorial District was 3.30 which is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This means that unwanted pregnancy influenced birth control on Reproductive Health among students of Colleges of Health Technology in the study area. The mean responses on the research question covering STIs was 3.39 signifying that rate of sexually transmitted infections influenced birth control on Reproductive Health among students of Colleges of Health Technology in the study area because the responses are above the cut-off point of 2.50.

**Hypothesis 1:** Unwanted pregnancy will not be significantly influenced by Birth Control on Reproductive Health among female students in Colleges of Health Technology in North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Table 5

**Chi-square analysis on unwanted pregnancies and birth control on reproductive health among female students**

| Responses          | Observed    | Expected | $\chi^2$ Cal | $\chi^2$ tab | df | Remark      |
|--------------------|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|----|-------------|
| Strongly Agreed    | 782         | 464.7    | 789.56       | 7.82         | 3  | Significant |
| Agreed             | 502         | 2980     |              |              |    |             |
| Disagreed          | 66          | 387.9    |              |              |    |             |
| Strongly Disagreed | 40          | 239.4    |              |              |    |             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>1390</b> |          |              |              |    |             |

$$\chi^2 = 789.56, df = 3$$

Data in table 5 showed that the calculated  $\chi^2$  value was 789.56 while the table value was 7.82 with 3df, since the calculated  $\chi^2$  value was greater than the table value, the null hypothesis which stated that unwanted pregnancy will not be significantly influenced by birth control on reproductive health among female students in the Colleges of Health Technology within North-West Senatorial District of Benue State was rejected. This implies that unwanted pregnancy was a significant factor on birth control and reproductive health among female students in the Colleges of Health Technology within the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.

**Hypothesis 2:** Sexually transmitted infection will not be significantly influenced by birth control on Reproductive Health among students in the Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.

Table 6

**Summary of Chi-square analysis on sexually transmitted infections and birth control on reproductive health among students**

| Responses          | Observed    | Expected | $\chi^2$ Cal | $\chi^2$ tab | df | Remark      |
|--------------------|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|----|-------------|
| Strongly Agreed    | 840         | 538.9    | 655.30       | 7.82         | 3  | Significant |
| Agreed             | 464         | 298.0    |              |              |    |             |
| Disagreed          | 51          | 330.1    |              |              |    |             |
| Strongly Disagreed | 35          | 223.0    |              |              |    |             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>1390</b> |          |              |              |    |             |

$\chi^2 = 655.30$ , df = 3,

The data in table 6 showed that the calculated  $\chi^2$  value was 655.30 while the table value was 7.82 with 3 df. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that sexually transmitted infections will not be significantly influenced by birth control on Reproductive Health among students in the Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State was rejected since the calculated  $\chi^2$  value was greater than the table value. This revealed that sexually transmitted infections were significant factor for the students in the Colleges of Health Technology within the North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

### *Discussion*

The findings of the study revealed that unwanted pregnancy was a significant factor of birth control on Reproductive Health among students in Colleges of Health Technology within the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State. This shows that female students are exposed to unwanted pregnancy and abortion when birth control practices are not used. This affects their academic pursuits and sometimes dropout of the school or delays their academic work. This finding agrees with the finding of Centre for Population and Family Health (1990) who found among the students in Lebanon, the Philippines and Turkey that birth control on Reproductive Health reduces ill time pregnancies among these students. The study concluded that when women do have access to modern methods of birth control, they generally choose not to have high risk pregnancies and unsafe abortion. This could be explained by the fact that mature female students who received lectures on maternal and child health; Reproductive Health and Family Planning including health education/promotion understood the importance of birth control on Reproductive Health and thereafter put it into use and space pregnancy which allowed time for academic work.

The result of the study also revealed that sexually transmitted infections were a significant factor of birth control on reproductive health among students in the Colleges of Health Technology in the North-West Senatorial District of Benue State. Majority of the students are confronted with sexually transmitted infections by practicing sexual intercourse without any birth control method such as diaphragm and condoms. This is because most of them come from rural areas that do not have any formal lessons on the impact of birth control to the students. However, when the significance of birth control practices is made known to them, they accept it and put it into use. This finding agrees with the work done by UNICEF (2004), which stated that the consequences of sexually transmitted infections among students who refused the barrier methods of birth control and are infected with STIs

ranges from pain, discomfort, psychological distress, frequent admission in hospital wards and abandoned of most lesson which are caused by primary syndromes to the tertiary manifestation of diseases progression which may include ectopic pregnancy, chronic pain and even death. Thus IPPF (2000), and Hatcher (1999), revealed that if condoms and diaphragm are used all the times, this will prevent the transmission of STIs among sexually active male and female students in the Colleges of Health Technology within the North West Senatorial District of Benue State.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were made.

- i. The government, parents and well-meaning individuals should support female students with birth control device, finance and should advise their wards while on Holidays to use these methods in order to prevent them from unexpected pregnancy.
- ii. Health workers working in the College sick bays should screen all sexually matured students against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. This will enable them to detect abnormalities among students and should provide the needed students with condoms and pills. They should provide referral form for complicated cases and should inform the authority to provide them with the health assistants.

### ***Conclusion***

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- i. Unwanted pregnancy is significantly influenced by birth control on Reproductive Health among female students in the Colleges of Health Technology in North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.
- ii. Sexually transmitted infection is significantly influenced by birth control on reproductive health among students of Colleges of Health Technology in North-West Senatorial District of Benue State.

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