Exploring the Prevalence of Abortion and its impact on the Academic Performance of Medical Female Students in Delta State University, Abraka

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Abstract:- **This study examined the prevalence of abortion and its impact on the academic performance of medical female students in Delta State University, Abraka. Descriptive survey method was employed for the study while simple random sampling technique was utilized in selecting a target sample size of 164 female medical students from a population of 1,640 across five departments in the College of Health Sciences, Delta State University Abraka. Self-designed instrument was used as the instrument for data collection. 150 copies of the questionnaire were successful retrieved from the field and were used for data analysis. Frequency count and percentages was employed as the statistical technique for data analysis. Results obtained from this study revealed the following findings; abortion is prevalent among the female medical students leaving off-campus. Factors that influences female medical students include; poverty and financial concern, psychological factor, maternal and social factors, peer group influence and poor knowledge of the risk factors behind abortion. Consequences of abortion include; the risk of anxiety and depression, negative impact on the academic outcome, leads to school drop-out among female students, lower degree of social support, abandonment and rejection from family's member and deprives the female student from regular reading. Therefore, strategies for preventing the negative effects caused by abortion include; educating the female medical student on the need to always use contraceptive, always organize seminars to inform the female student of the consequences of abortion, formulation polices that allows for disciplinary measures on victims of abortion and providing early sexuality education earlier for the female child.**

Keywords:- *Prevalence, Abortion, Medical, Academic Performance, Female Students.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Abortion is a global public health issue and an important barrier to effective academic performance of the female students. The term 'Abortion' connotes the removal or expulsion of an unwanted pregnancy embryo or fetus from the uterus either usually about the 20th week of gestation (World Health Organization, 2020). Abortion therefore implies the termination of pregnancy prior to the time the fetus is able to survive. Potts, Diggory and Peels, (1977) sees abortion as a loss of pregnancy before the fetus or fetuses are potentially capable of life independent of the mother. Abortion remains one of the leading causes relating to issues of maternal mortality and morbidity around the world, especially, in Nigeria (Adinma, 2011). Hence, unwanted pregnancies in youths and complications of induced abortions are an important health problem in the world (WHO, 2011).

From time immemorial, the prevalence of abortion among students has existed and victims are often subjected to stigmatization (Charles, Polis, Sridhara & Blum, 2008). Inspired by a incessant fear of the disgrace from the general public, female students at tertiary schools will in general prematurely end or end undesirable pregnancies attributable to such a significant number of reasons extending from assault, uncertain sexual accomplices, tyrant guardians, poor financial conditions and friend impact to ineptness of parenthood (Ajadi, 2009). At the point when female understudies understand that they have been impregnated by hitched and additionally more established sexual accomplices who are jobless, they are bound to settle on fetus removal so that their contemplates don't turn out to be unfavorably influenced (Patel and Kooverjee, 2009).

The prevalence of abortion among female medical students has resulted in a difficult feeling for the individual, both at a physical and mental level. Aware of the social shame of having undesirable pregnancies, numerous little youngsters who become pregnant look for premature birth as the best way to end undesirable pregnancies. So, it is but obvious to have some of complications after undergoing medical and surgical abortions (Carlsson, Breding and Larsson, 2018). Some female students experience feelings of guilt, sadness, remorse, shame, anger, and sadness following an abortion. These feelings probably indicate that they are experiencing normal grief and distress about all of the things they have been through. Beside the risks of unsafe abortion there are serious health risk complications involved in child bearing as an adolescent or teenager, they include; greater risk of pelvic bone immaturity, prolonged labour and otherwise difficult birth experience (Otoide *et al.,* 2011).

Academic performance implies the scores or examination grade a student obtained at the end of a final year examination. Laosa, (2005) sees academic performance as the core of pillars on which the entire future personality stands. Academic performance has always been the centers of academic development of the child and it

remains the most important goal of education. Academic performance of students can greatly be determined by a factors ranging from those present in the learner to those within the modifiable factors of the home of the student (Muhamed and Muhamed, 2010). One of the commonest issues facing undergraduate students is unwanted pregnancy followed by abortion (Adewole *et al,* 2002).

In all, the incidence of abortion among female students has continued to be a very controversial and complex issue given its political, ethical, religious, and health dimensions which often lead to heated debates in public forums. In Nigeria, reports have it that 20%–40% of maternal deaths are linked to abortions (Oriji *et al,* 2009), with 610,000 abortions occurring yearly (Henshaw *et al,* 1998). The prevalence of abortion particularly among female students are; incidence of school drop-out and performing poorly in examinations, hence, when a young female becomes pregnant her physical, social, educational and career development is significantly altered (Cordingley 2014). Unfortunately, an unwanted child has consequences for the mother's socioeconomic status, her educational attainment, her health, and her family development and this has serious economic and social repercussions for the larger society.

II.   MATERIALS AND METHODS

➢ Design of the Study

The study employed descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen to enable the researcher to directly investigate the phenomenon. According to Lockesh (1984) the choice for descriptive design is to attain applicable and preserved information concerning the position of phenomena and whenever possible to draw valid general conclusion for the data discovered.

➢ Participants

The participants for the study comprises of medical female students from the five departments under the college of health science in Delta State University Abraka, namely; Anatomy, Physiology, Medical Biochemistry, Nursing Science and Medicine and Surgery respectively. The estimated population of female students sampled for this study is 1,640 respondents.

➢ Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study is 164 female medical students which constitute 10% of the target population of the study. This concurs with the concept of Best and Kaln (2006) who argue that the ideal sample of a large population should be small enough to be selected economically. The simple random sampling technique was employed for this purpose. This technique used balloting on piece of paper which allows the researcher to select a sub-set that will represent the total population without bias.

➢ Instrument for Data Collection

A self-designed and structured questionnaire was employed in collecting the data. The instrument consists of two parts and was made up of 24 items with two sections A and B. Section A contains the respondent personal data with 4 items while section B is made up of 20 items which were formulated by the researcher to access the consequences of abortion on female students' academic performance. Using the four point type Likert scale, the participants were supposed to indicate their options by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate spaces provided.

➢ Validity of the Instrument

The draft copy of the questionnaire alongside the research questions and purpose of the study were submitted to the researcher's supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Human Physiology, Delta State University Abraka to ascertain the face and content validity. They were requested to check for the suitability of the language and appropriateness of the items for the study. There corrections and contributions were noted after which some items were restructured while others were dropped.

➢ Reliability of Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was administered on thirty (30) students who were not part of the respondents for the study. The Split-half technique was used in testing for internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient (r) obtained was 0.78 which showed that the instrument was reliable.

➢ Method of Data Collection

The researcher working with two trained assistants administered the questionnaire to the participants who were requested to carefully make responses after which the copies of the instrument were retrieved. Out of the 164 questionnaires distributed 150 were successfully retrieved while 14 were lost accounting for 91.5% of the response rate as shown in Table 1 below:

Response rate of questionnaire	Level of Responses	Percentage (%)
Number retrieved	150	91.5
Number lost	14	8.5
Total number distributed	164	100

Table 1:- Distribution of questionnaire
Sources: Survey Field, (2020)

➢ *Method of Data Analysis*

The method of data analysis that was employed is the simple percentage and frequency methods alongside tabular presentation in which descriptive analysis was used to infer meaning to the data in each table. The frequency of each response were calculated and converted to percentages of the total responses for each item in the questionnaire as shown in the formula below:

$$S.P = \frac{F}{N} X100\%$$

Where: S.P = Simple Percentage
 F   = No of Frequency
 N   = Total number of Respondents
 %   =Percentage

III. RESULTS

Level	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
100	40	26.7
200	40	26.7
300	35	23.3
400	35	23.3
TOTAL	150	100

Table 2:- Academic Levels of Respondent
Sources: Survey Field, (2020)

Table 2 above shows that a frequency of 40(26.7%) out of the total sampled respondents were 100 and 200 level female students respectively; this was immediately followed by a frequency of 35(23.3%) respondent that were in 300 and 400 levels, respectively.

Age	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
16-20years	98	65.3
21-25years	28	18.7
26years and above	24	16
Total	150	100

Table 3:- Age Distribution of Respondents
Sources: Survey Field, (2020)

From table 3 above it was discovered that 98 female students' constituting approximately 65.3% of the sampled population fall within the age bracket of 16-20years, 28 of the female students' constituting 18.7% fall within that age bracket of 21-25years and the remaining 24 female students' constituting 16% fall within the age bracket of 26years and above.

Religion	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Christian	119	79.3
Muslim	9	6
Others	22	14.7
Total	150	100

Table 4:- Religion of Respondents
Sources: Survey Field, (2020)

From the result of the data obtained in Table 4, it was revealed that out of the 150 persons sampled, 119 consisting approximately 79.3% were Christians, while, 9 respondents representing 6% were Muslims and the remaining 22(14.7%) were neither Christians nor Muslims. This shows that majority of the female students for the study in Delta State University Abraka are Christians.

Marital status	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Married	39	26
Single	111	74
Total	150	100

Table 5:- Marital status of Respondents
Source: fieldwork, (2020)

Table 5 above shows that a frequency of 111(74%) of the total sampled population were unmarried respondents (singles) when compared to the remaining 39(26%) that were married. This indicated that majority of the female respondents that participated in this research were still singles.

S/N	ITEM	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1.	Abortion is not common among female students in the medical school	70	46.7	65	43.3	10	6.7	5	3.3
2.	Poor attitude towards abortion is most prevalent among female undergraduates leaving off-campus	62	41.3	51	34	30	20	7	4.7
3.	Incidence of abortion is prevalent among female students from poorer homes	20	13.3	12	8	80	53.3	38	25.4
4.	Prevalence of abortion is high due to incidence of sexual promiscuity	45	30	76	50.7	25	16.7	4	2.6
5.	Lack of parental supervision forces most female students to become victims of abortion	67	44.7	49	32.7	22	14.7	12	8

Table 6:- Extent to which Abortion is prevalent among female medical students
Source: Fieldwork, (2020)

Key: SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, % - Percentage

Table 6 represents the responses on the Extent to which abortion is prevalent among female medical students in Delta State University, Abraka. In item 1, 90% of the participants jointly supported the view that abortion is not common among female students in the medical school when compared to the remaining 10% that rejected the view. In item 2, 75.3% jointly accepted the opinion that poor attitude towards abortion is most prevalent among female undergraduates leaving off-campus when compared to 24.7% that holds a contrary opinion. However, in item 3, 78.7% of the participants rejected the fact that the incidence of abortion is prevalent among female students from poorer homes when compared to 21.3% that accepted the view. Consequently, in item 4, 80.7% of the participants jointly supported the view that abortion among student is prevalent due to incidence of sexual promiscuity when compared to 19.3% that disagreed with the view. Nevertheless, in item 5 77.4% of the respondents were jointly satisfied with the view that lack of parental supervision forces most female students to become victims of abortion when compared to a fewer percentage of 22.7% that holds a contrary opinion.

S/N	ITEM	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
6.	Poverty and financial concern	102	68	34	22.7	10	6.7	4	2.7
7.	Psychological factor	41	27.3	78	52	12	8	19	12.7
8.	Maternal and social factors	40	26.7	56	37.3	40	26.7	14	9.3
9.	Peer group influence	51	34	92	61.3	5	3.3	2	1.3
10.	Poor knowledge of the risk factors behind abortion	47	31.3	72	48	20	13.3	11	7.3

Table 7:- Factors that influence female medical students to get involved in Abortion
Source: Fieldwork, (2020)

Key: SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, % - Percentage

From Table 7 represents the responses obtained from the respondents based on factors that influence medical female students to get involved in abortion in Delta State University, Abraka. The respondents on a percentage of 90.7% were satisfied with the fact that poverty and financial concern influences the female medical students when compared to the remaining 9.3% that were not satisfied with the opinion. In item 7, 79.3% jointly believed that psychological factor influences the female medical students when compared to the remaining 20.7% that rejected the view. In item 8, 54% were of the opinion that maternal and social factors to some extent influences the female medical students to get involved in abortion when compared to the remaining 46% that were not comfortable with the view. Furthermore, in item 9, 95.3% jointly agreed with the view that peer group influence the female medical students when compared to the remaining 4.7% with a different view. In item 10, 79.3% jointly agreed that poor knowledge of the risk factors behind abortion promotes incidence of abortion among female medical students when compared to the other 20.7% that rejected the view.

S/N	ITEM	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
11.	Increased risk of anxiety and depression during examinations	72	48	44	29.3	18	12	16	10.7
12.	Negative impact on the academic outcome of female medical students	40	26.7	98	65.3	10	6.7	2	1.3
13.	Abortion leads to school drop-out among female medical students	43	28.6	106	70.7	1	0.7	0	0
14.	Lower degree of social support, abandonment and rejection from family members	71	47.3	70	46.7	7	4.7	2	1.3
15.	Deprives the female medical student from regular reading	69	46	68	45.3	9	6	4	2.7

Table 8:- Consequences of abortion on the academic performance of the female medical students
Source: Fieldwork, (2020)

Key: SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, % - Percentage

Table 8 represents the responses obtained based on the consequences of abortion on the academic performance of female medical students in Delta State. In item 11, 77.3% of the participants jointly accepted that abortion leads to increase in the risk of anxiety and depression during examinations when compared to 22.7% that holds a contrary opinion. In item 12, 92% of the participants were satisfied with view that abortion has negative impact on the academic outcome of female medical students when compared to the remaining 8% that holds a negative opinion to this view. In item 13, 99.3% of the participants were satisfied with the view that abortion leads to school drop-out among female medical students when compared to only 0.7% that holds a contrary view. In item 14, 94% of the participants accepted the view that abortion could result to lower degree of social support, abandonment and rejection from family members when compared to 6% that holds different perspective. In item 15, 91.3% accepted the view that abortion deprives the female medical student from regular reading when compared to 8.7% that holds a contrary perception.

S/N	ITEM	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
16.	Educate female students on the need to always use contraceptive	90	60	45	30	10	6.7	5	3.3
17.	Organize seminars frequently to enlighten the female student on the consequences of abortion	57	38	83	53.4	8	5.3	2	1.3
18.	Formulation of polices that allows for disciplinary measures of abortion victims	68	45.3	53	35.3	22	14.7	7	4.7
19.	Sexuality education should be made available early at the child's education	50	33.3	70	46.7	16	10.7	14	9.3
20.	University management should ensure that there are counseling units to discourage the female students from undertaking abortion	60	40	31	20.7	20	30	29	19.3

Table 9:- Strategies to reduce the impact of abortion on the academic performance of female medical students
Source: Fieldwork, (2020)

Key: SA- Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, % - Percentage

Table 9 represents responses on the strategies to reduce the impact of abortion on the academic performance of female medical students in Delta State University, Abraka. In item 16, 90% of the participants were of the view that abortion could be reduced by educating the female students on the need to always use contraceptive whereas; the remaining 10% holds a different view. In item 17, 91.4% of the participants jointly believed that abortion could be prevented by organizing seminars frequently to enlighten the female student on the consequences of abortion when compared to a percentage of 8.6% that rejected the view. In item 18, 80.6% of the respondents jointly accepted the view that abortion could be prevented through formulation of polices that allows for disciplinary measures of abortion victims when compared to 19.4% that holds a contrary view. In item 19, it was noted that 80% of the participants accepted the view that sexuality education should be made available early at the child's education when compared to the remaining 20% that rejected the view. Finally, it was observed that 60.7% of the participants jointly supported the view that university management should ensure that there are counseling units to discourage the female students from undertaking abortion when compared to a higher percentage of 39.3% that sees it from another perspective.

IV. DISCUSSION

The prevalence of abortion has attracted substantial attention in recent times in Nigeria and everywhere in the world; abortion has therefore become a global issue. Findings from this study has revealed that abortion is not common among female students in Delta State University Abraka, however, poor attitude towards abortion is most prevalent among female undergraduates leaving off-campus, also, the incidence of abortion is prevalent among female students from poorer homes, and such prevalence was due to the incidence of sexual promiscuity. Consequently, lack of parental supervision forces most female students to become victims of abortion. This research finding was similar with the observations of WHO (2006); Cheng, (2008), and Negedu, (2001) that aptly confirmed that unwanted pregnancies and abortions are indeed on the increase among female adolescent students with consequences on their health and performance in school.

The study revealed that the following factors are capable of influencing the female medical students towards getting involved in abortion; poverty and financial concern, psychological factor, maternal and social factors, peer group influence and poor knowledge of the risk factors behind abortion. This finding agrees with the opinion of Thompson and Crase (2009) who affirmed that students from poor socio-economic status have higher tendency towards abortion. The finding is also supported by Varga (2002) who noted that abortion is largely attributable to poor communication about sexual matters between parents and their daughters.

The possible consequences of abortion on the academic performance of the female students included; the risk of anxiety and depression, negative impact on the academic outcome, leads to school drop-out among female students, lower degree of social support, abandonment and rejection from family members and deprives the female student from regular reading. This is consistent with the findings of Bachiochi, (2005) that complications such as; heavy, incessant bleeding, organ damage caused by perforated uterus, infections, vulnerability, confusion, anxiety and depression are associated with abortion among female students.

Finally, the following strategies were adopted to reduce the impact of abortion on the academic performance of female medical students; educating female students on the need to always use contraceptive, organizing of seminars frequently to enlighten the female students of the consequences of abortion, formulation of polices that allows for disciplinary measures of abortion victims, providing sexuality education earlier at the child's education and organizing counseling units to help discourage the female students from undertaking abortion. This falls in line with the recommendation of Olaitan, (2010) that proper education should be given to young ladies and boys about preventive methods of unsafe abortion. However, it was noted that organizing youth centers to discourage students from undertaking abortion by Government and NGOs are not paramount in remedying the consequences of abortion in Delta State University, Abraka.

V. CONCLUSION

Globally, abortion has been proven to be one of the most prevalent gynaecological experiences prevalent among youths. Findings from our study has established that poor attitude towards abortion are responsible for such prevalence especially as observed among the female students leaving off-campus and this was attributed to poverty and financial concern, psychological, maternal and social issues, peer group influence and poor knowledge of the risk associated abortion. Thus, it has become obvious that abortion has negative impact on the academic performance of female medical students in Delta State University, Abraka.

➢ *Ethics and consent*

Approval for this study was obtained from the Bioethics and Research Committee of the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Delta State University Abraka.

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