



# NIGER DELTA JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

ISSN: (Print) 2736 0202 | ISSN: (Online) 2756 4002 | URL: <https://www.ndjms.org>

Official Publication of  
**The Faculty of Clinical Sciences**  
**Niger Delta University**  
Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Volume 4 Issue 3, July 2025



# Niger Delta Journal of Medical Sciences

**July 2025 | Vol. 4 Issue 3**

ISSN: (Online) 2756 4002

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# **Niger Delta Journal Of Medical Sciences**

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**EDITORIAL:** Promoting Evidence-Based Practice Through Indigenous Research  
**Prof. Chika Onyinyechi Duru;** MBBS, MPH, MRCPCH(UK), FWACP, (Paed)  
Editor-in-Chief

*Niger Delta Journal of Medical Sciences. 2025;4(3)7*

**W**e are pleased to present Volume 4, Issue 3 (July 2025) of the *Niger Delta Medical Sciences Journal*, the official publication of the Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Niger Delta University. This edition showcases a compelling array of scholarly articles that reflect the ongoing commitment to research and evidence-based practice within and beyond the Niger Delta region.

The lead article by Dimoko *et al.* offers a thought-provoking comparative analysis on *Class Attendance and Academic Performance* among undergraduate medical students in a Yenagoa-based medical university. In an era where digital learning platforms are on the rise, this study underscores the enduring relevance of physical classroom engagement in shaping academic outcomes.

In the second article, Esene *et al.* examine the *Prevalence and Determinants of Primary Healthcare Utilization* in Okada, Edo State. Their work provides critical insights into healthcare-seeking behaviours in semi-urban communities, highlighting both systemic challenges and opportunities for policy intervention to strengthen primary healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

The third article by Okumoko *et al.* turns the spotlight on the *Prevalence and Social Determinants of Teenage Pregnancy in Bayelsa State*. This research addresses a pressing public health issue, shedding light on the sociocultural and economic factors that influence early pregnancies and offering recommendations for targeted interventions to reduce their occurrence.

Collectively, these contributions offer valuable perspectives that enhance our understanding of health systems, education, and social health determinants in Nigeria. We extend our sincere appreciation to the authors, reviewers, and editorial team for their rigorous efforts and commitment to academic excellence.

We trust that this issue will serve as a useful resource for scholars, clinicians, policymakers, and public health practitioners, and we look forward to continued scholarly engagement in future editions.

**Prof. Chika Onyinyechi Duru**

Chief Editor

*Niger Delta Journal of Medical Sciences*

Faculty of Clinical Sciences

Niger Delta University



# Class attendance and Academic performance: A comparative analysis among undergraduate medical students in a Medical University in Yenagoa, Nigeria.

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How to cite this article:

Dimoko AA, Harry TC, Ozigbo CJ: **Class attendance and Academic performance: A comparative analysis among undergraduate medical students in a Medical University in Yenagoa, Nigeria.**  
NDJMS 2025; 4(3): 8-18

Received: 19th May, 2025

Accepted: 17th July, 2025

Published 11th August, 2025

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Lecture attendance is a critical factor in medical education, yet its impact on different examination components remains underexplored. This study investigates differences in examination performance between medical students with  $\geq 75\%$  lecture attendance and those with  $< 75\%$  in a surgical end-of-posting examination.

**Methods:** A retrospective analysis of the academic performance of 60 1<sup>st</sup> – year clinical students was conducted. They were categorized into two groups based on lecture attendance ( $\geq 75\%$  vs.  $< 75\%$ ). Performance in multiple choice questions (MCQs), essay exams, long cases, short cases, overall clinical scores and overall examination scores were compared using simple descriptive statistics, logistic regression, and multiple regression analysis. ( $p < 0.01$ )

**Results:** Students with  $\geq 75\%$  lecture attendance scored significantly higher in long cases (mean=16.2 vs. 12.8,  $p < 0.01$ ) and short cases (mean=16.8 vs. 13.5,  $p < 0.01$ ) than those with  $< 75\%$ . Essay performance was significantly better in the  $\geq 75\%$  group ( $p = 0.001$ ), while MCQ performance showed no significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ). Logistic regression identified MCQ (OR=3.42,  $p = 0.01$ ),

essay (OR=6.62,  $p=0.001$ ), short case (OR=2.44,  $p=0.04$ ), and clinicals (OR=3.06,  $p=0.02$ ) as significant predictors of overall performance. Multiple regression analysis revealed that lecture attendance accounted for 18% of the variance in performance at clinical examinations ( $R^2=0.18$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

**Conclusion:** Lecture attendance significantly influences clinical examination and essay examination performance but has no significant effect on MCQ performance. Targeted interventions should focus on improving performance in key predictors like essays and clinicals to enhance overall outcomes while also addressing absenteeism from lectures.

**KEYWORDS:** Attendance, Medical Education, Surgical Exam, Performance, Clinical Competence.

## INTRODUCTION

Medical education is constantly evolving to meet the demands of modern healthcare. Some of the factors influencing academic and clinical performance of medical students are attendance, clinical exposure, simulation-based training, and formative assessments.<sup>1</sup> These elements have been extensively studied, with varying degrees of emphasis on their impact on learning outcomes. Several studies highlight the positive correlation between attendance and academic performance in medical school. Some researchers have found that consistent attendance significantly enhances students' understanding of complex medical concepts, leading to better examination results.<sup>2,3</sup> Other workers have also emphasized the role of attendance in fostering engagement and active participation, which are crucial for long-term retention of knowledge.<sup>4,5</sup> These views have however been contested by some authorities who noted that after adjustment for sex, gender and other variables there was no statistically significant relationship between class attendance and examination performance.<sup>6,7</sup> Attendance in medical education is a well-documented predictor

of clinical competence, as it facilitates hands-on learning and skill acquisition<sup>2,3</sup>. However, its influence on written exams, such as multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and essays, is less clear.

The concept of a 75% minimum lecture attendance requirement in medical education lacks a single definitive origin but there are a number of examples which provide some precedent.

India's National Medical Commission, (formerly the Medical Council of India) institutionalized attendance thresholds to standardize training, enforcing 75–90% attendance for MBBS programs to ensure foundational knowledge.<sup>8</sup> In Nigeria the 75% lecture attendance mandate was introduced by the National Universities Commission to curb student absenteeism and improve academic outcomes.<sup>9</sup> In South Africa undergraduate nursing programs require 75% minimum lecture attendance for examination eligibility, per the South African Nursing Council (SANC) Regulation R425<sup>10</sup> while in Egypt most public universities enforce mandatory lecture attendance, while private universities require mandatory attendance

only for tutorials, labs, or seminars<sup>11</sup>.

This study aimed to analyze differences in exam performance between students with  $\geq 75\%$  lecture attendance and those with  $< 75\%$  in a surgical end-of-posting exam, focusing on long cases, short cases, MCQ, essay exams, and overall performance. Additionally, trends and anomalies in the data are highlighted, and methods for addressing them are proposed.

### Methodology.

**Study area and setting:** This study was done on the pioneer set of 60 first year clinical students of a state-owned Medical University in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**Study Design and Population:** This was a post examination quality assurance study evaluating the effect of lecture attendance on examination performance after an eight-week posting based on didactic lecture attendance of  $< 75\%$  and  $\geq 75\%$ . The population consisted of 60 1<sup>st</sup> year clinical students in their first surgical posting (Junior Surgery). The students were recruited using the census method where every member of the class was involved in the study. As part of the policies introduced at the commencement of the clinical program, information was provided verbally and in writing on the compulsory nature of attendance in all activities, didactic and clinical. The posting lasted eight weeks and consisted of didactic lectures, ward rounds, outpatient clinics, theatre sessions, call duties and small group tutorials. Late production of the clinical logbooks made it difficult to monitor attendance at clinical activities from the beginning of the posting. It was however decided to monitor attendance at didactic lectures as a proxy for overall attendance.

There were 30 lecture topics taken by 14 different lecturers. Students were required to sign the attendance register at the onset of every lecture with the lecturer countersigning the said record at the end of the lecture. At the conclusion of the posting the register was used to calculate the attendance percentage for each student and stratify them into 2 groups ( $< 75\%$  and  $\geq 75\%$ ). A waiver was granted to allow those with  $< 75\%$  lecture attendance participate in the examinations and data collected included scores for Paper I (MCQ), Paper II (Essay), Long Cases, Short Cases, Total Written (MCQ + Essay), Total Clinical (Long case + short cases), Exam Total, and attendance percentages. This was exported from the Excel spreadsheet to IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, New York, USA) for analysis. Ethical committee approval was waived since this was a post-examination quality assurance initiative with data analyzed anonymously without contact with any of the subjects.

### Statistical Analysis:

- The following analyses were conducted:
- Descriptive statistics for each examination component based on attendance groups ( $\geq 75\%$  vs.  $< 75\%$ ).
- Logistic Regression to predict the likelihood of passing the overall exam based on attendance and performance in individual components.
- Correlation Analysis to assess the relationship between attendance percentage and total examination score.
- Comparative Analysis to compare performance trends between the two attendance groups.

**Results.****Table 1-Demographic characteristics of study population.**

| Demographic Variable |             | Number | Percentage (N-60) |
|----------------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Sex                  | Male        | 34     | 56.7              |
|                      | Female      | 26     | 43.3              |
| Age                  | 15-20 years | 13     | 21.7              |
|                      | 21-25 years | 32     | 53.3              |
|                      | 26-30 years | 15     | 25                |
|                      | 31-35 years | 0      | 0                 |

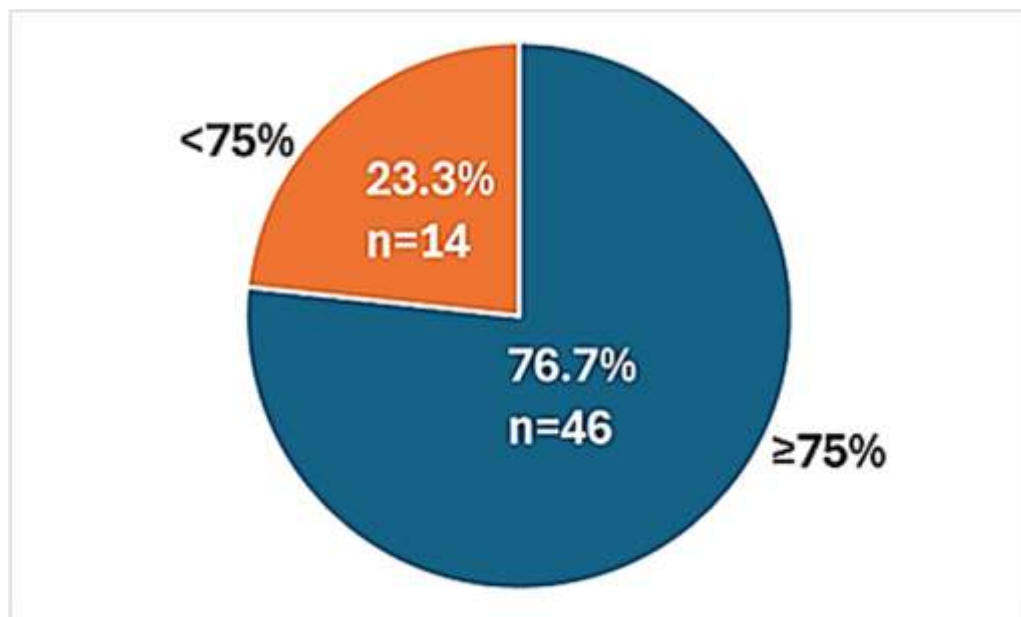


Figure 1: Pie chart showing percentage lecture attendance.

Table 2-Simple descriptive statistical indicators for the study groups.

| <b>Component<br/>(With score<br/>denominator)</b> | <b>Attendance<br/>≥75% (n=46)</b> | <b>Attendance &lt;75%<br/>(n=14)</b> | <b>p-value</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| MCQ (Over 25)                                     | Mean=18.2,<br>SD=3.4              | Mean=17.8, SD=3.1                    | 0.45           |
| Essay (Over 25)                                   | Mean=18.4,<br>SD=2.9              | Mean=12.3, SD=3.2                    | 0.001*         |
| Long Case (Over 25)                               | Mean=16.2,<br>SD=3.1              | Mean=12.8, SD=2.9                    | <0.01*         |
| Short Case (Over 25)                              | Mean=16.8,<br>SD=2.7              | Mean=13.5, SD=2.5                    | <0.01*         |
| Total Clinicals (Over 50)                         | Mean=32.6,<br>SD=4.2              | Mean=28.4, SD=3.8                    | <0.01*         |
| <b>Overall Score (Over 100)</b>                   | Mean=58.6,<br>SD=8.2              | Mean=49.3, SD=7.8                    | <0.01*         |

\*Statistically significant.

Students with ≥75% lecture attendance performed significantly better in essays, long cases, short cases, clinicals, and overall scores. No significant difference was observed in MCQ performance.



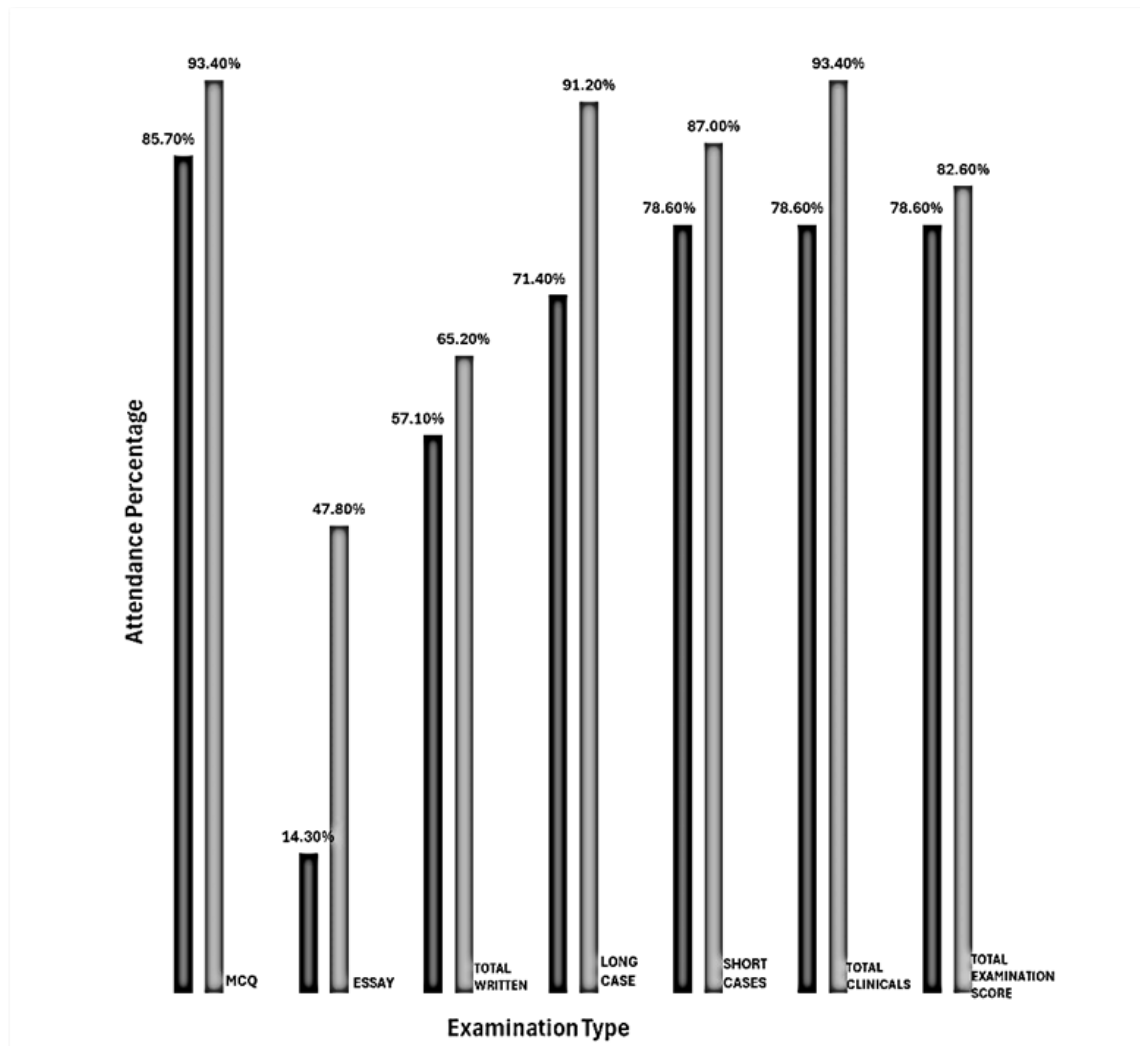


Figure 2: Bar chart comparing pass percentages of students with less than 75% lecture attendance (black bars) and students with more than 75% attendance (grey bars).

### Logistic Regression.

Logistic regression was used to predict the likelihood of passing the overall exam based on performance in individual components (MCQ, Essay, Long Case, Short Case).

The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (6) = 25.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The model explained 42.5% of the variance (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) and correctly classified 86.7% of cases.

MCQ, essay, short case, and long case are significant predictors of overall exam performance.

### Multiple Regression Analysis.

This was conducted to assess the impact of attendance on clinical performance.

### Model Specification:

- **Dependent Variable:** Clinical Performance Score.
- **Independent Variable:** Attendance Percentage.

| Variable   | Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | Standard Error | t-value | p-value | R <sup>2</sup> |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Attendance | 0.18                    | 0.05           | 3.62    | <0.01   | 0.18           |

Attendance accounted for 18% of the variance in clinical performance ( $R^2=0.18$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This indicates a moderate but significant relationship between lecture attendance and clinical performance.

### Correlation Analysis.

This was conducted to assess the relationship between attendance percentage and total examination score.

Pearson's r: 0.18

p-value: 0.17

There is a weak positive correlation between attendance and total examination score, but it was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Comparative Analysis.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of performance by attendance group.

| Attendance Group       | Overall examination pass rate. | Weakness                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| $\geq 75\%$ attendance | 82.6% (38/46)                  | Essay (47.8% pass rate) |
| $< 75\%$ attendance    | 78.6% (11/14)                  | Essay (14.3% pass rate) |

Both groups struggled with the essay component, but the high-attendance group performed significantly better. The MCQ and clinical components were strengths for both groups, with pass rates above 85%.

### Anomaly Detection:

Anomalies were identified using scatterplots. Two key anomalies were observed:

High-performing students with  $< 75\%$  lecture attendance: One student scored 60% in clinicals with only 26.7% lecture attendance while another had the highest score in MCQ and essay with 67.9% attendance.

Underperforming student with high attendance: A student scored 44.75% final score despite 100% lecture attendance.

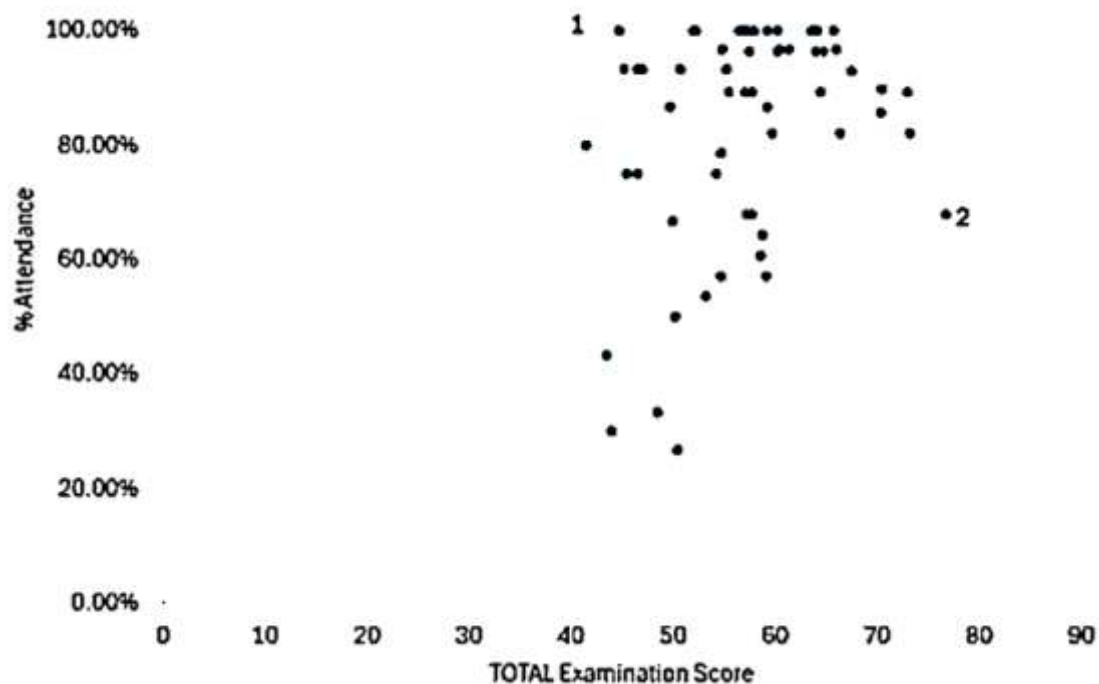


Figure 3: Scatterplot showing outliers in examination performance in relation to lecture attendance.1-Low score with 100% attendance.2-Highest examination score with 67.9% attendance.

### Discussion.

The findings align with previous studies demonstrating a positive correlation between lecture attendance and clinical performance<sup>2-7</sup>. Active participation in clinical postings enhances diagnostic and procedural skills, which are assessed in long and short cases<sup>7</sup>. However, the lack of significant differences in MCQ performance suggests that this component may rely more on independent study and prior knowledge rather than attendance<sup>7</sup>. The non-influence of attendance on the MCQ results could also be a result of the cueing effect. This occurs when the candidate can answer MCQ questions correctly by recognizing the correct option but could not have answered the question in the absence of options<sup>13</sup>. It is virtually impossible to estimate the amount

of cueing that may occur in an MCQ examination since it cannot usually be differentiated from guessing which is another reason why MCQ scores may not align with attendance<sup>13</sup>. The significant association between attendance and essay performance highlights the importance of developing critical thinking and writing skills<sup>14</sup>. Logistic regression identified MCQ, essay, short case, and clinicals as significant predictors of overall performance, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in these areas<sup>15</sup>. Anomalies, such as high-performing students with low attendance, may indicate exceptional self-study capabilities or prior clinical experience<sup>16</sup>. Good performance despite low lecture attendance was not due to previous exposure to the relevant lectures

because the class was a pioneer set and none of the students were repeating the posting.

Conversely, the failure of a student with 100% attendance underscores the need for individualized support and assessment of non-academic factors, such as mental health and learning disabilities<sup>17</sup>. Recommendations for improvement in student performance include attendance monitoring and institution of threshold alarms that trigger mitigation once a student is found to be lagging behind. Training and resources to improve essay-writing skills should also be provided. Further research is needed into factors such as study habits and previous academic performance which may affect examination performance.

### Conclusion.

This study highlights the importance of lecture attendance and its impact on exam performance. While attendance significantly influences clinical and essay components, its effect on MCQ performance is less pronounced. Interventions to mitigate challenges should focus on improving performance in key predictors like essays and clinicals to enhance overall performance.

**Limitations of the study:** The population size was small and the study should have compared several classes. This could not be done because this is a pioneer set of students. The study also did not capture percentage attendance of clinical activities. A larger, more robust study is planned in the future.

**Declaration of conflict of interest:** There was no declaration of conflict of interest from any of the authors.

**Acknowledgement:** The authors acknowledge the support of the Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Bayelsa Medical University.

**Funding:** No funding was obtained for this study.

**Contribution of the authors:** AD, TH and CO all contributed to conceptualization of the study and participated in the draft of the manuscript. AD did the data entry and analysis.

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# Primary Healthcare Utilization: An Assessment of its Prevalence and Determinants Among Residents of Okada, Edo State, Nigeria

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## How to cite this article:

Esene H, Ehis SB, Agbon-Ojeme G, Otuomagie F, Adam YV:  
**Primary Healthcare Utilization: An Assessment of its Prevalence and  
Determinants Among Residents of Okada, Edo State, Nigeria**  
NDJMS 2025; 4(3): 19-31

Received 17th March, 2025

Accepted 19th July, 2025

Published 11th August, 2025

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Primary healthcare (PHC) is essential for equitable health access, yet its utilisation remains inconsistent across communities in Nigeria. This study assessed the prevalence and determinants of Primary healthcare utilisation in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State.

**Methods:** A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted from February to November 2024 among 380 adults selected through multistage sampling. Data were collected via an interviewer-administered questionnaire and analysed using descriptive and bivariate statistics at a 5% significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Ethical approval was obtained (IUTH/R.24/VOL.I/102), and informed consent was secured. Participants with poor PHC use were counselled.

**Results:** Primary healthcare utilisation was reported by 299 respondents (78.7%). Utilisation was significantly associated with age ( $\chi^2 = 44.485$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), marital status ( $\chi^2 = 44.768$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), education ( $\chi^2 = 53.342$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), employment ( $\chi^2 = 10.098$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), and income ( $\chi^2 = 20.803$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Respondents earning  $\leq \text{₦}50,000$  were over three times more likely to utilise Primary healthcare than higher earners (OR = 3.178; 95% CI: 1.789–5.644). Similarly, those without tertiary education (OR = 3.542; 95% CI: 1.790–7.008) and those under 40 years (OR = 0.294; 95% CI: 0.129–0.667) showed distinct utilisation patterns. Males were significantly less

likely to utilize PHC (OR = 0.370;  $p = 0.002$ ), while marital status was not predictive in the multivariate model.

**Conclusion:** While overall PHC utilisation was high, disparities persist by age, sex, education, and income. Improving service quality and public trust are essential for improved utilisation. Mixed-method research is recommended to explore underlying behavioural and systemic barriers.

**KEYWORDS:** Health Services Accessibility, Primary Health Care, Health Services Utilization, Socioeconomic Factors, Nigeria

## Background

Primary healthcare (PHC) serves as the basis of healthcare service delivery, addressing up to 90% of an individual's health needs across their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> These include health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care, delivered in an integrated, accessible, and people-centred manner.<sup>2</sup> However, over half of the global population still lack access to essential PHC services, exposing a significant gap in equitable healthcare provision.<sup>3</sup> This disproportion challenges the principles of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).<sup>4</sup>

Scaling up the utilisation of high-quality PHC in LMICs could avert as many as 60 million deaths by 2030 and increase life expectancy by 3.7 years.<sup>5</sup> Achieving these gains, however, requires significant financial investment, with current estimates suggesting an additional \$200-328 billion globally each year.<sup>6</sup> Currently, low-income countries spend an average of \$3 per capita on primary healthcare, and lower-middle-income countries spend about \$16. Both figures fall significantly short of the recommended minimum—\$65 for low-income countries and \$59 for lower-middle-income countries<sup>5,7</sup>. By comparison, high-income countries invest substantially

more in PHC, estimated to be about 60 to 100 times more per capita, delineating the inequity in financing and resource allocation.<sup>8</sup>

Successful PHC models from around the world demonstrate its critical role in healthcare systems. In the United Kingdom, the National Health Service (NHS) recorded over 374 million primary care appointments in 2023, accounting for about 90% of health care appointments, and emphasise PHC's importance as the first point of contact for health concerns.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Thailand has achieved near universal health coverage, reaching over 99% of its population through its District Health Systems Networks, which deliver essential services in rural areas while addressing urban healthcare challenges through a mix of public and private providers.<sup>10</sup> Thailand's success with PHC is reflected in its average life expectancy of 77 years, significantly exceeding the global average of 73 years.

South Africa offers a tailored approach to PHC, addressing specific health priorities such as Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis, and maternal and child health, having made investments in more than 400 upgraded PHC centres, and the integration of community health workers (CHWs) into services for underserved communities.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, PHC utilisation remains

inconsistent, hampered by systemic barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, workforce shortages, and financial constraints.<sup>12</sup> Nigeria exemplifies these issues, with approximately 34,000 PHC facilities comprising 85% of the nation's healthcare infrastructure with only 20% meeting the basic operational standards due to inadequate funding, insufficient staffing, and limited essential medical supplies, as well as high out-of-pocket expenses, which account for 77% of Nigeria's total health expenditure and further hinder access.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, PHC utilisation in Nigeria is suboptimal, with many individuals bypassing PHC facilities for tertiary centres or traditional medicine. Multiple factors shape the utilisation of PHC services in Nigeria, ranging from individual and household characteristics to system-level issues. Socioeconomic constraints—particularly among the unemployed, those with limited education, or residents in rural areas—often limit access and health-seeking behaviours. Perceptions of poor service quality, long waiting times, lack of essential medicines, and inadequate staffing contribute to low confidence in PHC facilities.<sup>14</sup> These challenges push many to seek care in secondary or tertiary centres, or resort to self-medication and traditional medicines, despite the proximity and affordability of PHC services. There is also a variance in the quality of PHC distribution across the country, with key Northern states such as Abuja and Kaduna having a notably higher quantity and quality of PHC services in comparison to other parts of the country.<sup>15</sup>

Cultural beliefs and gender dynamics also influence PHC use, with some populations perceiving government facilities as inefficient or unfriendly. Women,

especially in patriarchal settings, may be restricted from seeking care independently or may prefer female health workers who are not always available in PHC centres. Meanwhile, awareness campaigns and community engagement strategies have shown promise in boosting PHC patronage, particularly when services are delivered by trusted community health workers. Addressing these behavioural, social, and systemic barriers is essential to improve PHC utilization and move toward equitable healthcare access.

Workforce challenges also remain a critical barrier to PHC utilisation in Nigeria, with the healthcare workforce density being 1.95 per 1,000 population, significantly below the World Health Organisation's (WHO)-recommended threshold.<sup>16</sup> The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic highlighted the fundamental role of strong PHC systems in health system resilience, as countries with strong PHC infrastructure were better able to detect and respond to the crisis while maintaining routine services. In Nigeria, however, the pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in the country's underfunded PHC system, emphasising the urgent need for sustained investment.<sup>13</sup> Against this backdrop, this study aimed to assess the prevalence of PHC utilisation in Okada, Edo State, and identify key factors influencing service use.



## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Study Area

The study was carried out in Ovia North East Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, Nigeria, which encompasses several communities within its jurisdiction. The LGA is home to several PHC facilities that provide 24-hour services, including antenatal care, immunisation, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) care, family planning, health education, as well as maternal and newborn care services. Most PHCs are manned by community health extension workers, with some support from nurses, midwives, and visiting medical officers. However, many face limitations such as inadequate infrastructure, shortages of skilled personnel, and inconsistent drug supplies. Based on the 2006 census, Ovia North East LGA had a population of 155,344 and covered a land area of 2,301 square kilometres. At an annual population growth rate of 2.5%, the population is expected to rise to about 242,071 by the end of 2024. The region is diverse, with communities such as Okada, Uhen, Utese, and others, inhabited by various ethnic groups including the Bini, Igbo, Yoruba, Urhobo, and more. This community-based study was conducted within this dynamic and culturally rich region. The LGA has a significant Christian population, with smaller groups practicing Islam and African Traditional Religion. It is also home to Igbinedion University and a variety of economic activities, including saw milling, which shapes the local economy.

### Study Population

This community-based study focused on all individuals aged 18 years and above who had resided in Ovia North East LGA for at least one year before the study. This

population was selected due to their potential awareness and experiences with the utilisation of PHC services within the local government area. The inclusion of individuals 18 years and above ensured that the study captured the perspectives of adults, who are the primary users of health services, particularly in terms of decision-making and healthcare-seeking behaviour.

### Sampling Technique

The minimum sample size was calculated using the formula for single population proportions, with a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and a PHC utilisation prevalence of 42.5% from a similar study. This yielded a sample size of 376, which was adjusted to 418 to account for a 10% non-response rate. Thereafter, a three-stage sampling technique was used to select the study sites and participants. In the first stage, three communities – Okada, Iguomo, and Egbeta – were selected from Ovia North East LGA using simple random sampling. The second stage involved stratified sampling with proportional allocation based on the sample size on their populations: Okada (25,479): 339 respondents, Iguomo (2,540): 34 respondents and Egbeta (3,413): 45 respondents. In the final stage, residential clusters such as streets and compounds within each community were randomly selected using a table of random numbers. Data collectors approached households within the selected clusters, starting from a central location (e.g., a market square or town hall) and moving systematically house-to-house. In each household, the first eligible adult encountered was invited to participate. If more than one eligible adult was present, one was randomly selected. This continued until the required number of respondents for each community was reached. Of the 418 individuals approached, data for 380 eligible participants were analyzed, giving a response rate of 90.9%.

## Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire, which was designed to capture sociodemographic characteristics, prevalence of PHC utilisation, and determinants of PHC utilisation. The questionnaire, adapted from existing instruments, was tailored to the study context.<sup>17,18</sup> The first section of the questionnaire collected data on participant's sociodemographic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, education level, occupation, and religion. These variables were important for identifying potential factors that might influence PHC utilisation. The second section assessed the prevalence of PHC utilisation, asking respondents about their usage of PHC services in the past year, the types of services accessed, and the frequency of visits. This provided a clear picture of the proportion of the population utilising PHC services and the factors that affected their usage. The final section focused on the determinants of PHC utilisation, exploring factors like socioeconomic status, proximity to healthcare facilities, service quality, and cultural beliefs. The aim was to identify barriers to PHC usage, such as financial constraints, transportation issues, or negative perceptions of services. A pre-test was conducted in Okha community, Ovia South West LGA, with 42 participants. Feedback from the pre-test led to adjustments in the questionnaire to ensure clarity and relevance for the main study. This approach ensured the data collection tool was both reliable and valid for the research objectives. Data collection took place over a three-week period within this time frame.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for this study was granted by the Ethical and Research Committee of

Igbinedion University, Okada (Ethical clearance certificate number: IUTH/R.24/VOL.I/102). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's aims and that participation was voluntary. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with no personal identifiers included in the questionnaires. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. All data collected were securely stored, with access restricted to the research team. At the end of data collection, participants identified as having poor utilisation of PHC services were counselled on the importance of regular and timely use of available primary healthcare facilities.

## Data Analysis

The data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distributions, were used to summarise the data. Univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted to explore associations between variables, using chi-square tests. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered significant. Results were presented in frequency tables and pie charts.

## Results

### Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents

The participants were aged <18 to >50 (mean  $35.1 \pm 13.8$ ) years, with 32.9% (125) aged 20–29 years and 24.2% (92) aged 30–39 years. Those aged  $\geq 50$  years were 69 (18.1%). There were 235 (61.8%) females and 145 (38.2%) males with 49.2% (187) married; 162 (42.6%) single, and 25 (6.6%) widowed.



Educational attainment was mainly secondary (166; 44.7%) and tertiary (152; 40.0%) with only 6 (1.6%) having no formal education. Most respondents were employed (268; 70.5%), while 57 (15.0%) were students and 55 (14.5%) unemployed. Regarding income, 173 (45.6%) earned below ₦30,000, 81 (21.3%) earned ₦30,000–₦49,999, 82 (21.6%) earned ₦50,000–₦99,999, and 44 (11.5%) earned above ₦100,000.

### Prevalence of PHC utilisation

Out of 380 respondents, 299 (78.7%) had ever visited a PHC facility, while 81 (21.3%) had not. Among those who had used PHC, 164 (54.8%) last visited more than six months ago, 92 (30.8%) within the past 1–6 months, and 43 (14.4%) within the last month.

### Factors affecting the utilisation of PHC

Primary health care facility utilisation was significantly associated with age, marital status, education, employment, and income ( $p < 0.05$ ). All respondents aged 18–19 and 40–49 years reported PHC use, while utilisation was lowest among those aged 30–39 years (56; 60.9%) ( $\chi^2 = 44.485$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Married (162; 86.6%) and widowed (25; 100.0%) participants had higher utilisation compared to singles (112; 69.1%) and divorced individuals (0.0%) ( $\chi^2 = 44.768$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Primary health care facility use was highest among those with only primary education (56; 100.0%) and lowest among tertiary-educated respondents (102; 67.1%) ( $\chi^2 = 53.342$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Employment status was also significant ( $\chi^2 = 10.098$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), with higher utilisation among the unemployed (49; 89.1%) compared to students (37; 64.9%).

Income was a strong determinant ( $\chi^2 = 20.803$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) of utilisation with those

earning  $\leq$  ₦50,000 having greater PHC use (217; 85.4%) than those earning above ₦50,000 (82; 65.1%). Although bivariate analysis showed no statistically significant association between sex and PHC utilisation ( $p = 0.116$ ), females reported slightly higher usage (191; 81.3%) than males (108; 74.5%). However, in the multivariate model, females were significantly more likely to use PHC services compared to males (OR = 2.703; 95% CI: 1.423–5.128;  $p = 0.002$ ). Similarly, respondents under 40 years of age had significantly lower odds of utilising PHC services compared to those aged 40 and above (OR = 0.294; 95% CI: 0.129–0.667;  $p = 0.003$ ).

Educational level remained a strong predictor of PHC utilisation. Respondents with non-tertiary education (i.e., primary or secondary) were over three times more likely to utilise PHC than those with tertiary education (OR = 3.542; 95% CI: 1.790–7.008;  $p < 0.001$ ). Notably, none of the six participants without formal education reported using PHC services, though their small number limited statistical inference. Similarly, income was a significant determinant of PHC utilisation with those earning ₦50,000 or less being over three times more likely to use PHC services compared to higher-income earners (OR = 3.178; 95% CI: 1.789–5.644;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Marital and employment status were not significantly associated with PHC utilisation in the adjusted model ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants**

| <b>Variables</b>                  | <b>Frequency<br/>(n=380)</b> | <b>Percentage<br/>(%)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Age (years)</b>                |                              |                           |
| 18 - <20                          | 31                           | 8.2                       |
| 20 - <30                          | 125                          | 32.9                      |
| 30 - <40                          | 92                           | 24.2                      |
| 40 - <50                          | 63                           | 16.6                      |
| ≥50                               | 69                           | 18.1                      |
| <b>Mean Age (± S.D)</b>           | <b>35.1 ±13.8</b>            |                           |
| <b>Sex</b>                        |                              |                           |
| Male                              | 145                          | 38.2                      |
| Female                            | 235                          | 61.8                      |
| <b>Marital Status</b>             |                              |                           |
| Single                            | 162                          | 42.6                      |
| Married                           | 187                          | 49.2                      |
| Divorced                          | 6                            | 1.6                       |
| Widowed                           | 25                           | 6.6                       |
| <b>Highest Level of Education</b> |                              |                           |
| Primary                           | 56                           | 14.7                      |
| Secondary                         | 166                          | 44.7                      |
| Tertiary                          | 152                          | 40.0                      |
| No formal education               | 6                            | 1.6                       |
| <b>Occupation</b>                 |                              |                           |
| Employed                          | 268                          | 70.5                      |
| Unemployed                        | 55                           | 14.5                      |
| Schooling                         | 57                           | 15.0                      |
| <b>Monthly Income (₦)</b>         |                              |                           |
| <30,000                           | 173                          | 45.6                      |
| 30,000-<50,000                    | 81                           | 21.3                      |
| 50,000-<100,000                   | 82                           | 21.6                      |
| ≥100,000                          | 44                           | 11.5                      |

**Table 2: Prevalence of PHC utilisation**

| <b>Variables</b>          | <b>Frequency<br/>(n=380)</b> | <b>Percentage<br/>(%)</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Ever visited a PHC</b> |                              |                           |
| Yes                       | 299                          | 78.7                      |
| No                        | 81                           | 21.3                      |
| <b>Time of last visit</b> |                              |                           |
| Less than a month         | 43                           | 11.3                      |
| 1-6 months                | 92                           | 24.2                      |
| More than 6 months        | 164                          | 43.2                      |
| Never                     | 81                           | 21.3                      |

**Table 3: Factors associated with PHC utilisation**

| Variables                 | PHC utilisation           |                       | OR (95% CI)           | $\chi^2$           | p-value |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------|
|                           | Yes<br>(n = 299)<br>n (%) | No<br>(n=81)<br>n (%) |                       |                    |         |
| <b>Age</b>                |                           |                       |                       |                    |         |
| 18 - <20                  | 31 (100.0)                | 0 (0.0)               |                       | Fischer's<br>exact | <0.001* |
| 20 - <30                  | 99 (79.2)                 | 26 (20.8)             |                       |                    |         |
| 30 - <40                  | 56 (60.9)                 | 36 (39.1)             |                       |                    |         |
| 40 - <50                  | 63 (100.0)                | 0 (0.0)               |                       |                    |         |
| ≥50                       | 50 (72.5)                 | 19 (27.5)             |                       |                    |         |
| <b>Sex</b>                |                           |                       |                       |                    |         |
| Male                      | 108 (74.5)                | 37 (25.5)             | 0.672 (0.409-1.105)   | 2.468              | 0.116   |
| Female                    | 191 (81.3)                | 44 (18.7)             |                       |                    |         |
| <b>Marital Status</b>     |                           |                       |                       |                    |         |
| Single                    | 112 (69.1)                | 50 (30.9)             |                       | Fischer's<br>exact | <0.001* |
| Married                   | 162 (86.6)                | 25 (13.4)             |                       |                    |         |
| Divorced                  | 0 (0.0)                   | 6 (100.0)             |                       |                    |         |
| Widowed                   | 25 (100.0)                | 0 (0.0)               |                       |                    |         |
| <b>Level of education</b> |                           |                       |                       |                    |         |
| No formal education       | 0 (0.0)                   | 6 (100.0)             |                       | Fischer's<br>exact | <0.001* |
| Primary Education         | 56 (100.0)                | 0 (0.0)               |                       |                    |         |
| Secondary Education       | 141 (84.9)                | 25 (15.1)             |                       |                    |         |
| Tertiary Education        | 102 (67.1)                | 50 (32.9)             |                       |                    |         |
| <b>Employment status</b>  |                           |                       |                       |                    |         |
| Employed                  | 213 (79.5)                | 55 (20.5)             |                       | 10.098             | 0.006*  |
| Unemployed                | 49 (89.1)                 | 6 (10.9)              |                       |                    |         |
| Schooling                 | 37 (64.9)                 | 20 (35.1)             |                       |                    |         |
| <b>Monthly Income (₦)</b> |                           |                       |                       |                    |         |
| ≤50,000                   | 217 (85.4)                | 37 (15.6)             | 3.147 (1.898 – 5.218) | 20.803             | <0.001* |
| >50,000                   | 82 (65.1)                 | 44 (34.9)             |                       |                    |         |

\* Significant

**Table 4: Predictors of PHC utilization**

| Predictors                | $\beta$<br>(Regression<br>co-efficient) | Odds<br>Ratio | 95% CI for OR |       | p-value  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|----------|
|                           |                                         |               | Lower         | Upper |          |
| <b>Age (years)</b>        |                                         |               |               |       |          |
| <40                       | -1.225                                  | 0.294         | 0.129         | 0.667 | 0.003**  |
| $\geq 40^*$               |                                         | 1             |               |       |          |
| <b>Sex</b>                |                                         |               |               |       |          |
| Female                    | 0.994                                   | 2.703         | 1.423         | 5.128 | 0.002**  |
| Male*                     |                                         | 1             |               |       |          |
| <b>Marital Status</b>     |                                         |               |               |       |          |
| Never married             | -0.120                                  | 0.887         | 0.429         | 1.834 | 0.746    |
| Ever married*             |                                         | 1             |               |       |          |
| <b>Level of education</b> |                                         |               |               |       |          |
| Non-tertiary              | 1.265                                   | 3.542         | 1.790         | 7.008 | <0.001** |
| Tertiary*                 |                                         | 1             |               |       |          |
| <b>Employment</b>         |                                         |               |               |       |          |
| Employed                  | 0.197                                   | 1.217         | 0.628         | 2.359 | 0.560    |
| Student/Unemployed*       |                                         | 1             |               |       |          |
| <b>Monthly income (₦)</b> |                                         |               |               |       |          |
| $\leq 50,000$             | 1.156                                   | 3.178         | 1.789         | 5.644 | <0.001** |
| >50,000*                  |                                         | 1             |               |       |          |

\*Reference category, \*\* Statistically significant,  $R^2 = 13.9\% - 21.6\%$

## Discussion

Although there was a high rate of primary healthcare (PHC) utilisation among residents of Ovia North East LGA, the use of PHC services was not evenly distributed across demographic groups, highlighting the influence of socioeconomic and individual-level factors in shaping healthcare-seeking behaviour. The levels of PHC utilisation observed in our study are comparable to those reported in a study conducted in Kaduna, where nearly all respondents utilised PHC services.<sup>18</sup> This similarity may reflect improvements in PHC development across both regions. While the rate reported in Kaduna is somewhat higher, such variation across regions may be influenced by contextual differences in healthcare delivery models, health awareness, or community

engagement, which were not directly examined in this study. Nonetheless, the high uptake in both settings reinforces the relevance of PHC in meeting population-level healthcare needs in Nigeria. Future research comparing system-level drivers such as service availability, accessibility, and perceived quality would provide clearer insight into regional utilisation disparities.

Age emerged as a significant determinant of PHC utilisation. While younger adults may seek care more frequently due to reproductive health needs and greater exposure to health messaging via schools or youth-targeted programmes, the decline observed among middle-aged individuals may stem from time constraints, work-related responsibilities, or a preference for private healthcare perceived as faster or



more effective.<sup>19,20</sup> Cultural norms that equate midlife with strength and self-reliance may also discourage formal healthcare use during this stage. This suggests a need for more flexible, workplace-friendly PHC services and community-based sensitisation that normalises routine care-seeking in mid-adulthood.

Gender differences were also evident, with females significantly more likely to utilise PHC services than males, aligning with broader evidence suggesting that women, due to maternal health responsibilities and greater interaction with the health system, are more frequent users of PHC.<sup>21</sup> Their frequent contact with the healthcare system for antenatal care, family planning, and child health services highlights the central role of maternal health responsibilities in shaping PHC engagement among women.

Marital status was significantly associated with PHC utilisation, with higher usage among married and widowed respondents. This likely reflects increased demand for maternal and reproductive health services, which our study identified as the main reason for PHC use.

While almost all respondents with only primary education utilised PHC services, utilisation declined progressively with higher education levels, with individuals without tertiary education being three times more likely to use PHC services than those with tertiary education. This contrasts with studies showing higher utilisation among more educated individuals, likely due to health literacy and awareness.<sup>18,22</sup> The inverse trend in this setting may reflect differences in health-seeking preferences or facility choice, with more educated individuals possibly opting for private or

specialist care. However, this study did not assess the types of health conditions prompting PHC use, so it remains unclear whether the nature of health needs differs significantly across educational levels. Further research is warranted to understand the motivations and constraints driving PHC choices across different educational groups.

Income emerged as a significant predictor of PHC utilisation, with lower-income individuals demonstrating higher levels of use compared to their higher-income counterparts. These findings mirror trends observed in other studies, where affordability makes PHC a preferred option for low-income groups.<sup>17</sup> Although this study did not explore reasons for utilisation, the observed pattern reinforces the relevance of PHC as a vital access point for underserved populations. Strengthening the quality and reach of PHC services remains essential to ensure that these facilities can continue to meet the needs of economically vulnerable groups.

## Conclusion

This study revealed high PHC utilisation in Ovia North East, particularly among older adults, lower-income earners, and those with less education. However, lower uptake among middle-aged and more educated groups suggests disparities in healthcare preferences. Addressing this requires further investigation into the motivations and perceptions influencing healthcare choices, especially among underutilising subgroups, alongside sustained efforts to strengthen PHC quality and responsiveness across all demographic strata.

## Limitations

No further diagnostic or confirmatory tools were used to confirm or refute the crude findings generated from the used General Health Questionnaire and as such, the prevalence and determinants of utilisation of primary health care may be over or under-reported. The lack of qualitative components, such as facility data, key informant interviews (KIIs), or focus group discussions (FGDs), limited deeper exploration of contextual factors influencing utilisation. A mixed-methods approach would have provided more comprehensive insights.

**Financial support and sponsorship:** Nil.

**Conflict of interest:** There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

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# Prevalence and Social Determinants of Teenage Pregnancy in Bayelsa State

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How to cite this article:

Okumoko MA, Okeke VC, Onwudiegwu U:

**Prevalence and Social Determinants of Teenage Pregnancy in Bayelsa State**

NDJMS 2025; 4(3): 32-43

Received 12th June, 2025

Accepted 30th July, 2025

Published 11th August, 2025

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Teenage pregnancy remains a pressing public health concern with far-reaching socio-economic and cultural implications, particularly in Nigeria. The prevalence of teenage pregnancy varies between states and countries with varying risk factors. This study aims to determine the prevalence of teenage pregnancy and social determinants associated with teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

**Methods:** This was a cross-sectional descriptive study conducted, using a questionnaire adapted from the World Health Organisation illustrative – questionnaire for interview survey with young people. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 2,644 teenagers aged 13-19 years were recruited to participate in the study. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and tables were used to present the results. Logistic regression was used to define the relationship between teenage pregnancy and selected sociodemographic factors. The level of statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$

**Results:** The prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa State, south-south Nigeria was 22.5%. A significantly higher proportion of teenage pregnancy occurred in those aged 13-15 years compared to their older counterparts ( $p < 0.001$ ). Teenage pregnancy was found to be significantly higher in those



*who attended public schools than private schools ( $p < 0.001$ ). Teenagers who lived in the urban areas, belonged to monogamous and high socioeconomic class families had a reduced likelihood of being pregnant when compared to their counterparts ( $p < 0.001$ ).*

**Conclusion:** *This study underscores the urgent need for a multi-sectoral approach to addressing teenage pregnancy. Interventions must go beyond merely providing information on contraception and must also tackle the structural barriers that perpetuate teenage pregnancies.*

**Keywords:** Teenage pregnancy, Prevalence, Social determinants, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy according to World Health Organization, is pregnancy in young women aged 13–19 years and is a major global public health concern that has dire social, economic, and health consequences.<sup>1</sup> During the teenage years, the individual progresses from the appearances of secondary sexual characteristics to full sexual maturity and within this period, psychological and emotional processes develop from those of a child to those of an adult.<sup>2</sup> The teenager also transits from being dependent socio-economically to one of relative independence. The culture of teenage pregnancy has decreased in high-income nations but is still prevalent in low and middle-income countries like Nigeria and South Africa.<sup>3,4</sup> Teenage birth incidence has been reported high in these countries as about 90% of teenage childbearing is attributed to reasons such as; low socioeconomic class, cultural, and health factors.<sup>4</sup> Overall, teenage pregnancy levels are considerably high in Nigeria, ranking in the third place in Sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>3,4</sup> though there are regional variations in Nigeria. In developed climes like the United States of America (USA), teenage pregnancy birth rates have dramatically declined over the past several decades,<sup>4</sup> however, disparities still exist in the rates of teenage pregnancies amongst the African

American and Hispanic youths as these ethnic groups contribute to 57% of teenage pregnancies in the USA.<sup>4</sup> Poverty, lack of education and quality health care have been shown to contribute to this increase. Subsistence farming and fishing are primary activities in Bayelsa state accompanied by very high youth and in particular, young women and girls' poverty rate.<sup>5</sup> This is because such tedious jobs as farming and fishing are majorly left for the menfolk and elderly who are expected to cater for them.<sup>5</sup> This social factor implies that due to economic difficulties, households force teenagers into early marriages or relationships invariably promoting teenage pregnancies. Several studies<sup>4-6</sup> report progressive, giant differences in the incidence of teenage pregnancy and this is attributed to the fact that skills and career openings in teaching, corporate business and other sectors for young, unmarried females are rare in the rural-settings of any community.<sup>4,5</sup>

Furthermore, some people in the Izon culture comprising izon speaking areas in Niger Delta region, specifically in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states, develop other related beliefs about early marriage and childbearing which exacerbate the problem.<sup>7</sup> For instance, these cultures embrace teenage pregnancy as a norm and as a result they reject attempts that go



against the tide when preventing teenage pregnancy.<sup>5,7</sup> Teenage pregnancies are often as a result of coitus with their first partner, who is sometimes of the same age and usually not more advantaged socially.<sup>6</sup>

Other than low socio-economic and cultural factors, family structure and inadequate or lack of monitoring from parents contributes to high teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa. Young girls in single-parent homes, households with family conflict or homes where the mother also had teenage pregnancy, are at higher risk of engaging in early sexual behaviours, and or unwanted pregnancies due to the probable absence of proper supervision or encouragement.<sup>6,7</sup> The Nigeria Demographic Health Survey reported that there are negative consequences associated with child bearing in the teenage years, especially to the life of the young mother and her baby.<sup>7</sup>

In all, teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa State continues to be multivariate, which includes socio-economic and cultural dimensions, as well as infrastructural challenges. Maternal malnutrition, foetal congenital malformations, maternal anaemia, twin pregnancy, preterm birth, preeclampsia, eclampsia, maternal infections are some complications that may occur and as such, pregnant teenage girls are more likely to drop out of school.<sup>2,4</sup> Teenage pregnancy is rife and can have huge consequences for the health, productivity, and future of the Niger Delta region of which Bayelsa state is a part. This study therefore, aims to offer specific findings that will hopefully guide the design of special prevention strategies and policies, which will greatly enhance the existing literature on teenage pregnancy in

Bayelsa State and comparable settings.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

### **Study Area**

This school-based study was carried out between November, 2024 and March, 2025 in three (3) randomly selected, local government areas of Bayelsa State namely; Kolokuma/Opokuma, Yenagoa and Sagbama.

Bayelsa is located in the South-South geopolitical zone, the core of the Niger Delta area of the country and was created in 1996.<sup>8</sup> Bayelsa state has an area of 10,773 square kilometres, a population of about 3,724,000 as at 2024 (from the 2006 national population census projection) and eight Local Government Areas with Yenagoa town as the state capital.<sup>9</sup> The 2024 adolescent population projection from 2006 national population census, at annual growth rate of 3% of 176,197 is 271,345.<sup>9</sup> The main inhabitants of Bayelsa state are Ijaw (Izon) along with Isoko and Urhobo people. The people are artisans, civil servants, traders, subsistence farmers, fishermen and lumberjacks.<sup>8</sup>

### **Study design**

This was a cross sectional analytical study. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the representative samples. Simple random sampling was used to select the three (3) local government areas and secondary schools used. The names of the 8 LGAs were written on separate pieces of paper and put in a bag, an observer picks a piece of paper without returning it to the bag till the 3 LGAs were picked. Based on the number of private and public schools in each of the selected LGAs, schools were proportionately selected (in a ratio of  $\approx 1:1$ ) using a computer generated table of random numbers. Systematic sampling

was used to recruit participants from the selected schools. A list of all secondary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma, Yenagoa and Sagbama LGA was obtained from the post – primary school management board and the ministry of education. The schools were stratified into public and private secondary schools according to their location-rural or urban. The dependent and independent variables were determined.

### Study Population

The target group for this study comprised all female adolescents, 13-19 years attending secondary school and residing in both rural and urban communities in Bayelsa State, south-south, Nigeria. Female teenagers who have resided in the selected local government area for at least 6 months and those who have ever been pregnant or not were included in this study while those teenagers whose parents/guardians did not give consent for participation in the study were excluded.

### Sample size

A minimum sample size was calculated with the following formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 P}{e^2}$$

Where,

n = Sample size

Z = Corresponding to 95% confidence interval (1.96)

P = Prevalence of teenage pregnancy in a similar study by Ayuba & Gani,<sup>10</sup> which was 6.2%

e = Level of precision – 10% = 0.1

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 6.2}{0.1^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 6.2}{0.01^2}$$

$$n = 2381.79 = 2382$$

The adjustment factor was calculated with the formula below:

$$q = \frac{1}{1-f}$$

Where  $q$  is the adjustment factor and  $f$  the non-response rate which is 10% (0.1) in this environment.

$$q = \frac{1}{1-0.1}$$

$$q = \frac{1}{0.9}$$

$$q = 1.11$$

Hence, adjusted minimum sample size was given as 2382 participants multiplied by the adjustment factor of 1.11=2644 participants.

Adjusting for non-response rate, a total sample size of 2644 was obtained.

### Data collection

Data was collected from female students attending secondary school in the selected local government areas using a structured, self-administered questionnaire for interview survey which was adapted from the WHO Illustrative questionnaire for interview – surveys with young people. Information on sociodemographic characteristics of the participants as well as information on the parents and family were obtained. Socioeconomic stratification was done based on the Oyediji<sup>9</sup> classification which used occupation and highest educational status of the parents.

### Data Analysis

Data was coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and analysed. Results are presented in tables as frequencies, percentages with confidence interval set at 95% and statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$ . Logistic regression was used to determine the relationship between teenage pregnancy and some

social determinants.

### Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health with reference numbers MOE/PRS/868/Vol.1 and BSHREC/Vol.1/24/05/1 respectively. Informed consent was obtained from the principals of selected schools and from parents of selected participants. Assent was also obtained from recruited participants.

## RESULTS

### Sociodemographic characteristics of participants

Two thousand six hundred and forty – four (2644) teenagers were recruited for this study. The mean age of all the participants was  $16.4 \pm 1.6$  years (Table I). Sixty-seven percent (67%) lived in urban areas, 40.7% belonged to the lower socioeconomic class, and majority of the participants (41%) were from polygamous families.

**Table I: Sociodemographic characteristics of participants**

| Sociodemographic Characteristics            | No. of respondents (N=2,644) |      |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------|
|                                             | N                            | %    |
| <b>Age</b>                                  |                              |      |
| 13-15 years                                 | 912                          | 34.5 |
| 16-18 years                                 | 1508                         | 57.0 |
| 19 years                                    | 224                          | 8.5  |
| <b>Type of School</b>                       |                              |      |
| Public                                      | 1843                         | 69.7 |
| Private                                     | 801                          | 30.3 |
| <b>Place of residence</b>                   |                              |      |
| Urban                                       | 1777                         | 67.2 |
| Rural                                       | 867                          | 32.8 |
| <b>Family Type</b>                          |                              |      |
| Monogamous                                  | 945                          | 35.7 |
| Polygamous                                  | 1086                         | 41.1 |
| Single/Separated/Divorced                   | 613                          | 23.2 |
| <b>Socioeconomic Class (SEC) of parents</b> |                              |      |
| Lower SEC                                   | 892                          | 33.7 |
| Middle SEC                                  | 1077                         | 40.7 |
| Upper SEC                                   | 675                          | 25.5 |

**Educational level and occupation of participants' parents**

Table II reveals that the highest percentage of participants' parents (31.7% of fathers and 29.3% of mothers) had tertiary education. Concerning occupation of the parents, most of them (28.7% of fathers and 27.8% of mothers) were junior grade civil servants.

**Table II: Educational level and occupation of participants' parents**

| Characteristic of Participants                                                | Father<br>(N =2644) |      | Mother<br>(N=2644) |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|--------------------|------|
|                                                                               | N                   | %    | N                  | %    |
| Highest educational level of parents                                          |                     |      |                    |      |
| University                                                                    | 567                 | 21.4 | 481                | 18.2 |
| Post-secondary education                                                      | 839                 | 31.7 | 774                | 29.3 |
| Secondary education                                                           | 682                 | 25.8 | 555                | 20.9 |
| Primary education                                                             | 381                 | 14.4 | 668                | 25.3 |
| No formal education                                                           | 175                 | 6.6  | 166                | 6.3  |
| Occupation of parents                                                         |                     |      |                    |      |
| Senior public servant/professional<br>/manager/ contractor/large scale trader | 452                 | 17.1 | 547                | 20.7 |
| Intermediate grade public/civil servant/<br>senior schoolteacher              | 421                 | 15.9 | 588                | 22.2 |
| Junior grade public civil servant/<br>Junior schoolteacher/driver (artisans)  | 736                 | 27.8 | 759                | 28.7 |
| Petty trader /labourers/messengers                                            | 688                 | 26.0 | 687                | 26.0 |
| Unemployed/homemaker/student                                                  | 347                 | 13.1 | 63                 | 2.4  |

### Prevalence of teenage pregnancy

Figure 1 shows that out of the two thousand six hundred and forty-four (2644) participants, five hundred and ninety-four (594) participants admitted having been pregnant at a point in time, giving a prevalence rate of 22.5% among the study participants.

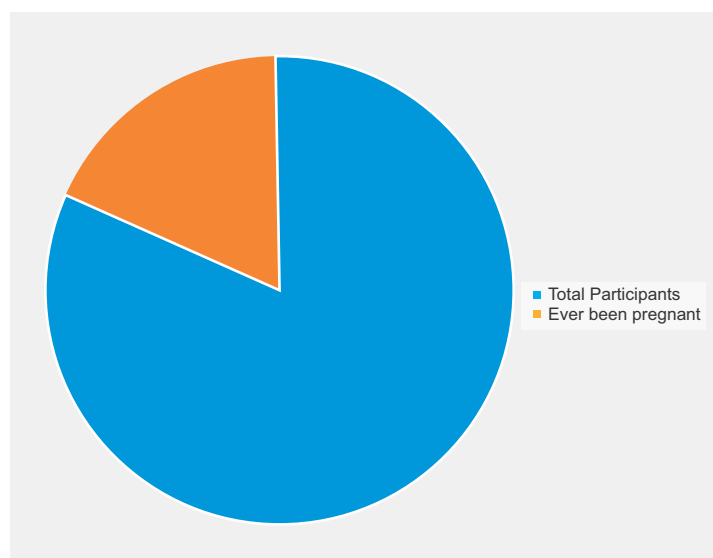


Figure 1: Diagram showing total number of participants and those who have been pregnant



Table III shows that majority of the teenagers who had ever been pregnant 55.2% (328) were aged 13 – 15 years. Of this number, majority, 67.7% and 58.9% attended public schools and were from

single parent/separated or divorced families respectively. More than half (55.7%) resided in the rural areas while 51.7% of the participants' parents were of the lower socioeconomic class.

**Table III: Prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa State**

| Variables                                   | No. of respondents (N=594) |      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------|
|                                             | N                          | %    |
| <b>Age</b>                                  |                            |      |
| 13-15 years                                 | 328                        | 55.2 |
| 16-18 years                                 | 102                        | 17.2 |
| 19 years                                    | 164                        | 27.6 |
| <b>Type of School</b>                       |                            |      |
| Public                                      | 402                        | 67.7 |
| Private                                     | 192                        | 32.3 |
| <b>Place of residence</b>                   |                            |      |
| Urban                                       | 263                        | 44.3 |
| Rural                                       | 331                        | 55.7 |
| <b>Family Type</b>                          |                            |      |
| Monogamous                                  | 36                         | 6.1  |
| Polygamous                                  | 208                        | 35.0 |
| Single/Separated/Divorced                   | 350                        | 58.9 |
| <b>Socioeconomic Class (SEC) of parents</b> |                            |      |
| Lower SEC                                   | 307                        | 51.7 |
| Middle SEC                                  | 225                        | 37.9 |
| Upper SEC                                   | 62                         | 10.4 |

#### **Prevalence of teenage pregnancy by age and social determinants**

Table IV shows that there was a significant difference in the likelihood of occurrence of teenage pregnancy in those teenagers aged 13-15 years, 16-18 years ( $p < 0.001$ , OR-0.87; 95% CI: 0.52-1.16) and ( $p = 0.000$ , OR-0.36; 0.28-0.74) respectively. Those participants who lived in the urban areas or belonged to monogamous families had a reduced likelihood of being pregnant ( $p < 0.001$ , OR-1.22; 95% CI: 0.75-1.65) and ( $p < 0.001$ , OR-0.82; 95% CI: 0.79-1.45) respectively.

**Table IV: Prevalence of teenage pregnancy by age and social determinants**

| Variables                                   | No. of respondents<br>(N=594) |      | UOR(95%CI)      | P value  |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|-----------------|----------|
|                                             | N                             | %    |                 |          |
| <b>Age</b>                                  |                               |      |                 |          |
| 13-15 years                                 | 328                           | 55.2 | 0.87(0.52-1.16) | <0.001** |
| 16-18 years                                 | 102                           | 17.2 | 0.36(0.28-0.74) | 0.000**  |
| 19 years*                                   | 164                           | 27.6 | RC              |          |
| <b>Type of School</b>                       |                               |      |                 |          |
| Public                                      | 402                           | 67.7 | 1.01(0.58-1.14) | <0.001** |
| Private*                                    | 192                           | 32.3 | RC              |          |
| <b>Place of residence</b>                   |                               |      |                 |          |
| Urban                                       | 263                           | 44.3 | 1.22(0.75-1.65) | <0.001** |
| Rural*                                      | 331                           | 55.7 | RC              |          |
| <b>Family Type</b>                          |                               |      |                 |          |
| Monogamous                                  | 36                            | 6.1  | 0.82(0.79-1.45) | <0.001** |
| Polygamous                                  | 208                           | 35.0 | 1.38(0.60-2.16) | <0.004   |
| Single/Separated/Divorced*                  | 350                           | 58.9 | RC              |          |
| <b>Socioeconomic Class (SEC) of parents</b> |                               |      |                 |          |
| Lower SEC                                   | 307                           | 51.7 | 1.15(0.81-1.71) | <0.001** |
| Middle SEC                                  | 225                           | 37.9 | 0.96(0.45-1.94) | 0.001**  |
| Upper SEC*                                  | 62                            | 10.4 | RC              |          |

\*RC-Reference Category, \*\*significant p value, UOR-Unadjusted Odds Ratio, CI- Confidence Interval

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence and social determinants of teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa State. This study found that the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Bayelsa state was 22.5%. A higher proportion of teenage pregnancy was seen in the teenagers between 13-15 years, this could be as a result of early sexual debut, inadequate or lack of sexual and reproductive health education. This finding was also found to be high in similar studies carried out by Kassa et al.,<sup>3</sup> and Envuladu et al.<sup>6</sup> in Nigeria and Akella and Jordan<sup>4</sup> in females 15-19 years old in the USA. Although, this finding contradicts that of Ayuba and Gani,<sup>10</sup> who in their study of sociodemographic determinants of teenage pregnancy in the Niger-Delta of

Nigeria in 2012, found that teenage pregnancy was more prevalent amongst older teenagers, 18- 19years. This may be due to present day increased exposure to social media and unsupervised access to sexually prolific contents that predispose these younger teenagers to experiment amongst themselves. Teenagers whose parents fall into the lower SEC were also found to have a higher pregnancy rate as compared to their counterparts in the middle and high SEC.<sup>12,13</sup> This finding could be attributed to the fact that teenagers at this age, face the challenges of affording their basic needs especially if their parents are in the lower SEC, exposing them to having sexual relationships with those who can cater for their needs.<sup>13</sup>

It was also found that majority of the teenagers who attended public secondary schools and/or lived in the rural areas have been pregnant at a given time. This finding could be plausibly explained by the possible lack or inadequate supervision of teenagers attending public schools,<sup>13-15</sup> coupled with the belief that those residing in the rural areas are culturally ingrained with the impression that teenage pregnancy promotes and invariably confirms fertility and helps to ensure financial security, even if the pregnancy is out of wedlock.<sup>15</sup> Ezenwaka et al., in their study, exploring factors constraining utilization of contraceptive services among adolescents in south eastern Nigeria, had comparable findings, in that girls from rural communities are least likely to have access to adequate sexual and reproductive health services that provide adequate and explicit information on contraceptive use<sup>16</sup> its advantages in preventing unwanted pregnancy and promoting sexual and reproductive health.<sup>16,17</sup>

This study further found that a large number of teenagers from single parent, separated or divorced homes had been pregnant. This may be because girls born into homes, or growing up in homes especially, without a father figure, tend to spend a great amount of time trying to seek out and obtain the love and affection that they did not receive from their father.<sup>18</sup> Various studies<sup>16-18</sup> have shown that children reared in single parent homes are more likely to become single parents as well especially if their mothers were teenage parents. A significantly lower number of teenage pregnancies was found in those teenagers who belonged to monogamous families. This could be attributed to adequate parental guidance and

monitoring, with parents likely to notice deviant behaviour on time and institute an intervention.<sup>17-19</sup> Parents in such families are often times educated and in turn try to ensure their children are educated. Also, such families are not usually large, therefore, teenagers in such environments can have their needs promptly catered for without seeking external support that may predispose them to sexual molestation or rape.<sup>19</sup>

The inverse relationship between parental education levels and teenage pregnancy rates highlights the critical role of education in shaping adolescent outcomes.<sup>20,21</sup> Parents with higher education levels are more likely to provide accurate information about sexual and reproductive health, foster open communication, and set high expectations for their children. These practices reduce the likelihood of early pregnancies and promote healthier adolescent development.<sup>21</sup>

Government policies should enforce establishment of youth-friendly health clinics in both urban and rural areas to provide teenage girls with access to contraception, sexual health education, and prenatal care.<sup>21,24</sup> Implement mobile health units to serve remote and underserved communities, offering reproductive health services and counselling on a regular basis. Also to increase collaboration with international organizations such as WHO and UNICEF to address infrastructural gaps and enhance healthcare delivery in rural Bayelsa. Preventive measures should encompass a multi-sectorial model of education, the development of supportive policies, community mobilization, and advocated access to health facilities.

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores the urgent need for a multi-sectoral approach to addressing teenage pregnancy. Interventions must go beyond merely providing information on contraception and must also tackle the structural barriers that perpetuate teenage pregnancies. These barriers include limited family type, educational opportunities, poor healthcare access, socio-economic inequality, and cultural norms. It is therefore recommended that there should be improved supervision of teenagers in public schools, training and retraining of teachers on knowledge and teaching of sexual and reproductive health. Reproductive health services and contraceptives should be made easily accessible to teenagers without the attendant stigmatisation from the parents, community and even health workers.

## STUDY LIMITATION

Male counterparts in teenage pregnancy and the modifiable factors were not explored to provide a holistic view of the problem of teenage pregnancy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the parents, students and teachers of the selected secondary schools for their cooperation in carrying out this study.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicting interest(s)

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