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Determinants of health service providers' attitude towards equitability in sexual relationships in south-east Nigeria



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**Authors: Agu Ozioma, Mbachu Chinyere,  
Onwujekwe Obinna**



## BACKGROUND

- ❖ Although young people are at higher risk for sexual and reproductive health (SRH) problems, they still experience multiple barriers when accessing quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.
- ❖ Health system interventions designed to improve the SRH and rights of young people focus largely on strengthening the capacities and skills of healthcare providers to provide youth-friendly services, without addressing underlying gender and power perspectives that shape how those services are delivered.
- ❖ Health workers act as gatekeepers to SRH service delivery, their attitude towards gender norms related to the SRH of young people determines how they provide these services to young people.
- ❖ This study is designed to examine health service providers' gender norm attitudes toward young girls' and young boys' expectations in sexual relationships.

## Data collection methods

A cross-sectional study, carried out in six local governments, two urban and four rural communities in Ebonyi state, southeast Nigeria, using a quantitative research method

\*These six LGAs have a total of 84 primary health care (PHC) that provide youth-friendly SRH services and have been prioritized by the state government and partners for scaling up SRH interventions.

- The study population consisted of healthcare service providers in the selected PHCs
- Data were collected using Open Data Kit (ODK) Toolbox & Paper questionnaire for quality control
- Facility-level survey
- We recruited and trained forty-two research assistants for four days in the month of October 2022

## Data analysis

A total of 255 health service providers were interviewed and analysed - (24 males and 231 females).

- Univariate and logistic regression analyses were performed and the level of statistical significance was determined by a  $p$ -value of  $<0.05$  using Stata.
- The data collection instrument was adapted from an annual publication on gender and evaluation by UN women<sup>27</sup> and was pre-tested in Enugu state.



## RESULTS

- Majority of the respondents were community health workers, 186 (72.94%) with a higher percentage of them between 25 years and below, 67(26.27%).
- About two-thirds of them had never denied health services to a young person or treated them unfairly because of their gender, 244 (95.69%).
- A higher number of the respondents disagree that a woman/ girl who has sex before she marries does not deserve respect.
- While the highest number of respondents agreed that a man/boy should know what his partner likes during sex, 245(96.08%).
- About 78% of health service providers do not agree that; a man/ boy who has sex before he marries does not deserve respect.
- However, a good number of respondents agreed that; a man/boy and a girl/woman should have sex before they become engaged to see whether they are suited for each other 104(40.78%).

Variables 255	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Partially agree F (%)
<b>Attitude towards female expectations in sexual relationship</b>			
A woman/ girl should not initiate sex.	85(33.33)	170(66.67)	42(16.47)
A woman/ girl who has sex before she marries does not deserve respect.	57(22.35)	198(77.65)	23(9.02)
<b>Attitude towards male expectation in sexual relationship</b>			
It is the man/ boy who decides what type of sex to have.	133(52.16)	122(47.84)	34(13.33)
Men/ boys are always ready to have sex.	212(83.14)	43(16.86)	45(17.65)
Men/ boys need sex more than women/ girls do.	196(76.86)	59(23.14)	38(14.90)
Sex is more important to men than to women	183(71.76)	72(28.24)	41(16.08)
A man should know what his partner likes during sex.	245(96.08)	10(3.92)	9(3.53)
A man/ boy needs other women/ girls even if things with his wife/ female partner are fine.	57(22.35)	198(77.65)	24(9.41)
It disgusts me when I see a man acting like a woman.	193(75.69)	62(24.31)	16(6.27)
A woman/ girl should not initiate sex.	85(33.33)	170(66.67)	42(16.47)
A woman/ girl who has sex before she marries does not deserve respect.	57(22.35)	198(77.65)	23(9.02)
A man/ boy who has sex before he marries does not deserve respect	56(21.96)	199(78.04)	26(10.20)
<b>Female-male expectation in sexual relationship</b>			
You don't talk about sex you just do it.	63(24.71)	192(75.29)	20(7.84)
Young men and women should have sex before they become engaged to see whether they are suited for each other.	104(40.78)	151(59.22)	55(21.57)

Variables	Attitude towards female expectation Coefficient (p-value)	Attitude towards male expectation Coefficient (p-value)	Male-female expectation Coefficient (p-value)
<b>Demographic determinants</b>			
Gender (Female)	-0.12(0.13)	-0.14(0.25)	-0.05(0.55)
Age category			
• 26-30years	0.00(0.96)	-0.01(0.93)	-0.05(0.51)
• 31-35years	-0.04(0.62)	-0.17(0.20)	0.08(0.34)
• 36-40 years	-0.02(0.82)	-0.07(0.54)	-0.03(0.69)
• 41 and above	-0.03(0.69)	-0.11(0.36)	0.01(0.88)
Years of formal education received for current work			
• No formal education	0.03(0.82)	-0.20(0.23)	-0.17(0.11)
• 1-2years training	0.03(0.75)	-0.03(0.86)	<b>-0.25(0.02)*</b>
• 3 years and above	0.05(0.64)	-0.07(0.69)	-0.21(0.06)
Received formal training for the provision of youth-friendly SRH services (yes)	0.00 (0.93)	-0.02 (0.75)	0.02s0.70)
<b>Environmental/ social determinants</b>			
Location of resident (urban)	-0.00(0.11)	<b>-0.18(0.04)*</b>	<b>-0.16(0.00)*</b>
Location of healthcare facility			
• Outskirts of town/villages	0.26(0.14)	-0.12(0.65)	-0.03(0.84)
• Town center	0.25(0.20)	-0.32(0.21)	0.28(0.87)
• Village center	0.20(0.95)	-0.30(0.22)	-0.07(0.65)
Staff Size			
• 1-5 staff	-0.00(0.95)	-0.11(0.25)	-0.02(0.73)
• 6-7 staff	<b>-0.18(0.01)*</b>	-0.08(0.41)	0.05(0.44)
• 8 staff and above	-0.06(0.43)	-0.20(0.08)	-0.12(0.12)
<b>Behavioral factors (biased treatment of SRH services)</b>			
Young girls are treated unfairly than young boys	-0.11(0.50)	-0.47(0.07)	-0.19(0.27)
Young people are treated unfairly than adults	-0.01(0.95)	0.43(0.09)	0.09(0.57)





## CONCLUSION

- ❑ The study showed that some demographic factors such as (location of the health facility, years of formal education received, staff size, and health service provider's behaviour) were revealed as predictors of health service providers' attitudes towards (female expectation, male expectation, and male-female expectation) in sexual relationships
- ❑ These predictors contribute greatly to health service providers' gender norm attitude towards young people in sexual relationships and could either hinder or promote their delivery of SRH services to young people's
- ❑ Strategic gender-equitable intervention is needed in addressing the attitudes of health service providers toward young girls' and young boys' expectations in sexual relationships.
- ❑ Healthcare providers having a more positive attitude towards harmful social expectations about men and women regarding sexual relationships could transform into effective delivery of gender-equitable and inclusive youth-friendly SRH services for young people.

•THANK YOU FOR LISTENING