

Awareness of HBV infection and age at coitarche amongst female adolescents in southern Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: Hepatitis B Viral (HBV) infection is a sexually transmitted infection awareness is key to prevention of the infection. Over half of the teenagers have had sexual intercourse by age 18 years in the United States.

Aim: To determine the awareness of HBV infection and the age at coitarche amongst adolescents in Rivers State.

Methods: This was study was a 6-week cross-sectional study comprising of 240 female adolescents attending holiday camp meeting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The subjects comprised of secondary school students and University undergraduates. The consent for the study was given by the care-giver and permission for the study was obtained from the Director Public Health Rivers State Ministry of Health. Information was collected and analysed using SPSS version 25.

Results: The mean age was 15-years. The age range was 10 – 19 years. The distribution was 10 – 14 years represented by 51 (21.3%) of the subjects and 15 – 19 years represented by 189 (78.7%) of the subjects. The educational status comprised of secondary school 153 (64%) while tertiary level of education comprised of 87 (36%) of the subjects.

One hundred and twenty-nine (54%) were aware of HBV infection while the mean age at coitarche was 17 years.

Conclusion: The study revealed the awareness of HBV infection among female adolescent as 54% while the mean age at coitarche was 17 years. It necessary that adolescents be aware of the dangers of unprotective coitus and contacting HBV infection and the benefits of HBV vaccination.

Keywords: Awareness; HBV; Infection; Menarche; Adolescents

1. Introduction

The prevalence of HBV infection approximately 316 million globally.¹ Hepatitis B viral is major cause of Liver Cirrhosis and Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC).[1,2] This viral infection is basically transmitted through body fluids and blood,[1] Data available reveals that reveals that globally millions of people living with living with HBV infection and so many at risk of the infection are not aware especially in the developing countries of the world.[3,4] Awareness of the disease condition and risk factors is key to preventing this disease condition.[4] One of the established mode of transmission is through unprotected sexual intercourse,[5]The age of first sexual debut is important especially amongst adolescents bearing in mind that they engage in risky unhealthy sexual behaviour that will ultimately affect their reproductive health.[6]

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Age at coitarche differs from region to region and is influenced by myriad of factors ranging from socio-religious, level of education, influences on social media and this is important in gynaecological practice because its relationship to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HBV infections and cervical cancer,[6]

The research is aimed at determining the awareness of HBV infection and the age at coitarche among female adolescents in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Aim

To determine the awareness of HBV infection and the age at coitarche amongst female adolescents in Rivers State.

2. Material and method

This was study was a 6-week cross-sectional study comprising of 240 female adolescents attending holiday camp meeting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The subjects comprised of secondary school students and University undergraduates. The consent for the study was given by the care-giver and permission for the study was obtained from the Director Public Health Rivers State Ministry of Health. Information was collected and analysed using SPSS version 25.

3. Results

The mean age was 15-years. The age range was 10 – 19 years. The distribution was 10 – 14 years which was represented by 51 (21.3%) of the subjects and 15 – 19 years represented by 189(78.7%) of the subjects. The educational status included those with secondary school level were 153 (64%) while tertiary level of education comprised 87 (36%) of the subjects.

One hundred and twenty-nine (54%) were aware of HBV infection while the mean age at coitarche was 17 years.

Table 1 Summary of results

Number of Subjects	240
Mean age	15 years
Age range	10 – 19 years
Awareness of HBV infection	54%
Age at menarche	17 years

Table 2 Age distribution of subjects

Age distribution (years)	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
10 - 14	51	21.7
15 – 19	189	78.3

Table 3 Educational status

Educational status	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Secondary	153	64
Tertiary	87	36

4. Discussion

Our study revealed the level of awareness of HPV infection to be 54% amongst adolescents and the mean age at menarche as 16 years. This was lower than the level of awareness of HBV infection among medical students and nursing students with an awareness 99.9% and 97.3% respectively.[2,3] This can be explained from the perspective were in the medical discipline as compared to the study population who were students drawn from other disciplines. When comparing with the educational status of study population, 36% were undergraduates (tertiary level) compared with the previous study where the population of the study group were under graduate medical and dental students,[4,5]

In a study by Onu et al revealed the age at coitarche amongst secondary school in Jos, Nigeria to be 14 years.⁶ This figure is lower than that gotten in our study which was 17 years. The reason are multifactorial but top most may be socio-cultural and religious,[6] In the middle belt of the culture tend to favour early marriage as compared to the southern part of the country, early coitarche.[7-9] In a study conducted by Stokiose M et al Polish University the mean sexual initiation was 18 years which higher than that gotten from our study but a little lower in females compared to their male counterparts.[10] The reason for males were to satisfy their libido while for females was for love.[10]

5. Conclusion

The study revealed the awareness of HBV infection among female adolescent as 54% while the mean age at coitarche was 17 years. It necessary that adolescents be aware of the dangers of unprotective coitus and contacting HBV infection and the benefits of HBV vaccination.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgement

Mother, Baby and Adolescent Global Foundation.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they do not have any competing interest.

Statement of ethical approval

Ethical clearance was gotten from the office of the Director of Public Health Rivers State Ministry of Health in line with Helsinki Declaration (Revised 13th edition).

Grant

There was no grant for research.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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