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## **Role of Parents and Teachers in Preventing Adolescent School Girls' Reproductive Health Problems in Anambra State Nigeria**

*C.E Alagbu<sup>1</sup>, Enemuo Linda O.<sup>2</sup>, Nnaemezie Nkiru Onyinyechukwu<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

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### **ABSTRACT**

The health of adolescents Intertwined with their physical, psychological and social development which is endangered by sexual and reproductive health hazards which are increase. To determine this reproductive health problems, and determine the role of parent and teachers in preventing adolescent school girls reproductive health problem among adolescent school in Anambra State this study was designed. The study was delimited to only secondary schools in Awka South L.G.A of Anambra State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design used on 1086 parents and 201 teachers in secondary schools in Awka South L.G.A. Research tool was a researcher-developed instrument titled Reproductive Health problems of Adolescent girls Role of teacher and parent's questionnaire. The Instrument was divided into four sections. Section A, on demographic data, B on reproductive health problems of adolescent school girl, C on Role of Parents and D on role of teachers. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. Mean was used to answer the research questions; analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The result of the study indicated that adolescent school girl has numerous reproductive health problems with many roles to be played by both parents and the teachers. Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendation were made. Parent and teachers should look into finding out more reproductive health problems of adolescent school girl and methods of preventing them.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Universally, the word adolescent refers to young children mid-way in their developmental stage of becoming matured adults; hence, there seem not to be any uniform or generally agreed age bracket that qualifies one to be regarded as an adolescent. According to world Health Organization ( WHO) (2012), adolescent could be classified into three stages. Early adolescence (10-13years); mid adolescence (14-15years), late adolescence (16-19years). The early adolescence as explained by WHO (2012) is characterized with rapid growth and sexual maturation. While the mid adolescence stage, they said is distinguished by stronger psychological sense of identity, whereas the late adolescence stage, they averred is characterized by proper developments of adult form. For this study, adolescents are groups of people especially girls as indicated by this study as within the age range of 10-19 years of age. These adolescent girls are mostly vulnerable to mortality and morbidity from early pregnancy whether ending in child birth or abortion. This group of people, generally lack adequate knowledge about their own development and information on how to get help. Adolescents are likely to face a range of health and social challenges that is the reason why WHO (2019) advocated for the promotion of adolescents sexual and reproductive health education to meet these challenges of the adolescents. During the period of adolescence, young girls go through many changes as they move into physical maturity.

Early prepubescent changes occur when the secondary sexual characteristics appear. Girls may begin to develop breast buds as early as 8 years old, Pubic hair, armpit and leg hairs, menarche and growth spurt. The sudden and rapid physical changes that adolescents go through make adolescents very self-conscious. In some cases, this may occur without a problem from their parents and other family members; however, this may lead to conflict in some families as the parents try to keep control. Parents need to remember that it is natural and normal for their adolescent girls to be interested in body changes and sexual topics, and that does not mean involving them in sexual activity. Parents can deal with this by acknowledging the girl child's physical changes and attractiveness without crossing parent-child boundaries. Parents can also take pride in the adolescent's growth into maturity. The parents should be careful not to create a distance that may make the adolescent feel abandoned. Parents should be ready for and recognize common conflicts that may develop while parenting adolescents. They should also know that their adolescent girl-child will continuously require their support as they face the numerous reproductive health problems. Hence, parents and teachers should maintain open lines of communication with clear limits or boundary, to help reduce major conflicts (Medline plus, 2019).

Parents and teachers who care for and work with adolescents need to learn about adolescent's development and continuously educate themselves about the realities of adolescent needs of today. The response of societies to the reproductive health needs of adolescents should be based on information that helps them attain a level of maturity required to make responsible decisions. UNFA (2019) also suggested providing access to comprehensive sexuality education, services to prevent, diagnose and treat STIs and counselling on family planning and also empowering young people such as adolescent to know and exercise their rights including the right to delay marriage and the right to refuse unwanted sexual advances. This role could be played by either the parents or parent figure and also teachers with the school setting because with the age of adolescent, they are mostly school children in order

to communicate perfectly with them. The practical role school teacher's play in addressing adolescent reproductive health issues such as teenage pregnancy, STDs, and HIV/AIDS cannot be overemphasized.

However, teachers face challenges in addressing key topic such as condom use, unwanted pregnancies, sexual orientation, masturbation and contraception, some components of reproductive health like sexuality and reproduction are covered in other subjects like biology and religious studies (George, Unnet, Ethel, Amisa, Grace & Scott 2017). All this under listed issues could be addressed properly under adolescent's reproductive health problem in schools.

Sexuality education for adolescent school girls plays a crucial part in their sexual and reproductive health and general well-being. School and family usually share the responsibility of providing reproductive health education but the outcomes are often unsatisfactory. In order to help adolescents face the challenges of moving into maturity, the teachers and parents need to understand adolescent developmental stages and understand their role in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems. It is against this background that this study is designed to determine the role of parents and teachers in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra State.

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## Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the role of parents and teachers in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study determined the:

1. Reproductive health problems of adolescent school girls in secondary schools in Anambra State
2. Role of parents in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra State based on their gender.
3. Role of teacher in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra State based on their gender.

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## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the reproductive health problems of adolescent school girls in secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. What are the role of parents in preventing adolescent school girls reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state based on their gender?
3. What are the role of teachers in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state base on their gender?

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## Research Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis guided the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant difference in the role of parent in preventing adolescent school girls' reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state based on their parents gender.
2. There will be no significant difference in the role of teachers in preventing adolescent school girls' reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state based on their gender.

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## Method

The descriptive survey research design will be adopted for this study. This study will be carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. The sample of the study consisted of 178 parents and 145 teachers in Awka South LGA. Also simple random sampling was used to select nine schools out of the eighteen secondary schools in Awka South LGA where the parents and teachers were selected from. This sample was gotten through stratified sampling technique by first determining the number of parents that attend PTA meetings in the various schools used for the study. While the same stratified sampling technique was also used to determine the number of teachers used for the study based on the total number of teachers in each school. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The researcher developed questionnaire made up of three sections: Part A, B and C. for the two target populations to be studied- Reproductive Health Problems of Adolescent Girls Role of Teacher Questionnaire (RHPAGRTQ). Content and face validity of the instrument was established with the help of three experts, two from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education and one from the Department of Educational Foundations with emphasis on measurement and evaluation, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The test items of the (RHPAGRTQ) was assessed for reliability using 20 copies of the questionnaire administered to parents and teachers in Enugu state.

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## Presentation and Analysis of Data

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected and the results. The analyses of the research questions and hypotheses are presented item by item using tables. A summary of findings of the study was also presented

**Research Question 1**

What are the reproductive health problems of adolescent girls in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Teachers and Parents on the Reproductive Health Problems of Adolescent School Girls in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Remark
1.	Problems arising from puberty onset	1269	4.01	Agree
2.	Issues relating to personal hygiene	1269	3.51	Agree
3.	Breast enlargement	1269	3.84	Agree
4.	Menstruation and issues related to menstruation	1269	3.78	Agree
5.	Sexually transmitted infections	1269	3.66	Agree
6.	Contraceptive usage	1269	3.27	Undecided
7.	Abortion	1269	3.36	Undecided
8.	Methods of delaying intercourse engagement	1269	3.37	Undecided
9.	Cervical cancer	1269	3.33	Undecided
10.	Unplanned pregnancy	1269	3.80	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean responses of teachers and parents on the reproductive health problems of adolescent girls in secondary schools. The mean responses ranged from 3.27 to 4.01. These means indicate that the respondents agreed that puberty onset, growth spurt and body changes, issues relating to personal hygiene, breast enlargement, menstruation and issues related to menstruation, sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy are the reproductive health problems of adolescent girls in secondary schools in Anambra State but were undecided on whether contraceptive usage, abortion, methods of delaying intercourse engagement and cervical cancer are the reproductive health problems of adolescent school girls in secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Research Question 2:**

What are the roles of parents in preventing adolescent school girls' reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state based on their gender?

Table 2 : Mean Responses of Parents on their in Preventing Adolescent Girls' Reproductive Health Problems in Secondary Schools in Anambra State (N=1068)

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	Monitoring adolescents school girl's movements at night and during free time	4.31	Agree
2.	Monitoring the adolescent school girl's friends	4.30	Agree
3.	Talking to them about sex-related matters	4.48	Agree
4.	Providing information concerning contraceptives	3.44	Agree
5.	Helping adolescents obtain methods to avoid unintended pregnancy	3.67	Agree
6.	Educating adolescents on sexuality	4.40	Agree
7.	Influencing adolescent girls' attitude in forming sexual relationship	2.96	Undecided
8.	Teaching adolescent on issues related to reproductive health.	4.43	Agree
9.	Discussing issues relating to sex, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection	4.54	Agree
10.	Discussing the consequences of engage in risky health behaviours early sexual	4.39	Agree
11.	Discussing health problems at home including emotional health, and mental health	4.30	Agree
12.	Educating them on how to enhance decision making skills.	4.29	Agree
13.	Educating them on the problem associated with puberty onset	4.39	Agree
14.	Educating them on personal hygiene as it relates to menstruation	4.43	Agree
15.	Education them on emergency contraceptives usage	3.42	Agree
16.	Educating on strategies to delay involvement in sexual intercourse	4.25	Agree
17.	Educating and discussing reproductive health matters generally	4.33	Agree
18.	Educating on pregnancy testing and total abstinence from sexual; relationship up until	4.53	Agree
19.	Educating them on dangers of abortion	4.51	Agree
20.	Only the father is qualified to educate the girl child on some or all these listed	1.65	Disagree
21.	Only the mother is qualified to educate the adolescent girl child on all these listed	1.96	Disagree

Table 2 displays the mean responses by parents on their roles in preventing reproductive health problems of adolescent girls. It reveals that 18 roles were identified with mean ratings ranging from 3.42 - 4.54. These include; monitoring adolescents school girl's movements at night and during free time; monitoring the adolescent school girl's friends; talking to them about sex-related matters; providing information concerning contraceptives; helping adolescents obtain methods to avoid unintended pregnancy; educating adolescents on sexuality; teaching adolescent on issues related to reproductive health; discussing issues relating to sex, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection; discussing the consequences of engaging in risky health behaviours etc.

### Research Question 3 :

What are the roles of teachers in preventing adolescent school girl's reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state base on their gender?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Teachers on their Roles in Preventing Adolescent Girls' Reproductive Health Problems in Secondary Schools in Anambra State Based on Gender (N=201)

S/N	Items	Female (N=137)		Male (N=64)	
		Mean	Rmk	Mean	Rmk
1.	Providing information concerning contraceptives	3.42	A	3.11	U
2.	Educating adolescents on sexuality issues	4.34	A	3.88	A
3.	Counselling adolescents on their reproductive health concerns and fears	4.23	A	4.20	A
4.	Counselling adolescents on reproductive health issues	4.20	A	4.20	A
5.	Educating on modern contraception	3.53	A	3.22	U
6.	Proper referral of difficult reproductive health cases	4.05	A	3.89	A
7.	Educating on hygiene as regards reproductive health problems like	4.27	A	3.94	A
8.	Educating on STI (sexually transmitted infection) and treatment	4.26	A	4.12	A
9.	Educating on general health screening	4.29	A	3.81	A
10.	Educating on how to reduce risky sexual behaviours	4.30	A	3.94	A
11.	Educating on how to enhance decision making skills	4.11	A	3.72	A
12.	Giving confidential reproductive health care and talk (without parents	3.42	A	3.44	A
13.	Educating adolescents girls on breast development	4.13	A	3.95	A
14.	Educating on condom and their proper usage	3.50	A	3.52	A
15.	Providing formal classroom materials on health topics such as	4.20	A	4.03	A
16.	Providing a wide range of free physical and mental health services to	4.12	A	4.61	A
17.	Helping disseminate health information about risky sex experimentation	4.07	A	3.78	A
18.	Interacting with students about reproductive health problems	3.82	A	3.70	A
19.	Helping adolescents obtain methods to avoid unintended pregnancy	3.73	A	3.75	A
20.	Educating on emergency contraception, pregnancy testing and abortion	3.31	U	3.41	A
21.	Any teacher male or female is qualified to educate the adolescent girl	3.33	U	3.20	U
22.	Only the female teachers are qualified to educate the adolescent girl child	2.62	U	2.94	U

Table 5 shows the responses of male and female teachers on their roles in preventing adolescent girls' reproductive health problems in secondary schools. As shown by mean ratings which ranged from 3.42 – 4.34, 19 roles were identified by female teachers out of the 22 roles listed while male teacher identified 18 roles with mean ratings ranging from 3.41 – 4.61. According to the female teachers, their roles were; Providing information concerning contraceptives; Educating adolescents on sexuality issues; counseling adolescents on their reproductive health concerns and fears; Counselling adolescents on reproductive health issues; Educating on modern contraception; Proper referral of difficult reproductive health cases; Educating on hygiene as regards reproductive health problems like menstruation; Educating on STI (sexually transmitted infection) and treatment; Educating on general health screening; Educating on how to reduce risky sexual behaviours; Educating on how to enhance decision making skills; Giving confidential reproductive health care and talk (without parents knowing); Educating adolescents girls on breast development; Educating on condom and their proper usage; Providing formal classroom materials on health topics such as reproductive health etc.

### Hypothesis 1:

There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of the roles of parents in preventing adolescent school girls' reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state based on their gender.

Table 4 : t-test Comparison of Mean Ratings on the Roles of Parents in Preventing Adolescent Girls' Reproductive Health Problems by Gender

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Female	942	3.96	.34	1066	3.027	.003	Significant
Male	126	3.86	.48				

The t-test results displayed in Table 10 indicate that the mean ratings on the roles of parents in preventing adolescent girls' reproductive health problems was significantly different based on gender,  $t(1066) 3.027, p < 0.05$ . The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

### Hypothesis 2 :

There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of the role of teachers in preventing adolescent school girls' reproductive health problems in secondary schools in Anambra state based on their gender.

Table 5: t-test Comparison of Mean Ratings on Teachers' Roles in Preventing Adolescent Girls' Reproductive Health Problems by Gender

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Female	137	3.87	.48	199	1.678	.095	Not Significant
Male	64	3.74	.58				

The t-test results displayed in Table 13 indicate that female and male teachers were not significantly different in their mean ratings of their roles in preventing adolescent girls' reproductive health problems,  $t(199) 3.027, p > 0.05$ ; therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that the two groups will not be significantly different in their mean ratings was not rejected.

## DISCUSSION

Findings of the study showed that, problems arising from puberty onset, Growth spurt and body changes, issues relating to personal hygiene, Breast enlargement, menstruation and issues related to menstruation and sexually transmitted Infections were agreed by both parents and teacher as some of the reproductive health problems of adolescent girls in secondary schools in Anambra State. This is so, because as an adolescent girl, issues arising from puberty would always come and when this begins to occur, the adolescent girl would need a lot of help through it, if not she will be misled by others. This study agreed with the study done by Mayer, Santelli and Colyle (n.d) that there is need to health address the adolescent reproductive health issues such as teenage, pregnancy, S.T.Is and HIV/AIDS. Joyce, Angela, Mark, Basia and William (2020), also identified that adolescent girls has issue with their sexual health and that need to be properly addressed such as HIV and teenage pregnancy. Also the hypothesis of no significant difference between the reproductive health problems of adolescent schools girls in secondary schools in Anambra state was not significant with regards to school type was accepted.

The findings of the study showed that parents are supposed to monitor their adolescent school girl's movement especially at night and during free time, monitor their friends, talk to them about sex related matters, provide information concerning contraceptive, help adolescents obtain methods to avoid unintended pregnancy, educating adolescent on sexuality, teaching adolescents on issues related to reproductive health, discussing issues, relating to sex, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection, discussing the consequences of engaging in risky health behaviours early sexual relationship and marriage, discussing health problems at home including emotional health and mental health problems resulting from reproductive health problem. Parent also agreed that their role to an adolescent school girl should also include, educating them on how to enhance decision making skills, educating them on the problem associated with puberty onset, educating them on personal hygiene as it related to menstruation, educating them on emergency contraceptive usage, educating them on strategies to delay involvement in sexual Intercourse, educating and discussing reproductive health matters generally, educating them on pregnancy testing and total abstinence from sexual; relationship up till marriage, educating them on dangers of abortion.

Though, they were not certain about influencing adolescent girls' attitude in forming sexual relationship but were in agreement with others. The findings of these study was in line with the study conducted by Triage, Ann and Paul (2008) that generally parents would want to talk with their children about reproductive health problems, majority of them feel uncomfortable and in most cases, lack sound knowledge to communicate to their children. The study was not inline and in agreement with the study conducted by Wilson et al (2015). That parents communicated less on issues related to sex, relationships and condom, and that parents focused on sexually transmitted infections and issues and issues with dating. The null hypothesis of no significant difference in the role of father and mother with regards to preventing adolescence girl reproductive health problem was significant and therefore rejected. This was inline too with the study of Wilson et al (2015), that fathers were perceived by adolescents to be strict, Intimidating, unapproachable and unavailable. And the null hypotheses of no significant difference in the role of parents based on their educational level, has significant and therefore rejected.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers accepted some of the role but differ in providing information concerning contraceptive and Educating on modern contraception and also Educating on emergency contraceptive and Educating on emergency contraception, pregnancy testing and abortion. Education. The teacher agreed that some their roles, include Educating adolescents on sexuality issues, counselling adolescents on reproductive health concerns and fears, Educating them on how to reduce risky sexual behaviours, giving confidential reproductive healthcare and talk (without parents knowing) and helping disseminate health information about risky sex experimentation.

This finding was in line with the findings of Aransiola, Asa, Obiefuna, Olarewaju, Ojo and Fatusi (2013) that students are more protected when teachers educate them on reproductive health matters. The teachers also agreed that they will be committed to teaching adolescents reproductive health education. Majer, Santelli and Goyle (n.d) also identified that some of the role of teacher include; addressing adolescent reproductive health issues such as teenage pregnancy, S.T.Ds and HIV/AIDS, identifying adolescent girls most at risk for pregnancy, S.T.Is and HIV/AIDS and also protection of students' privacy in that area. All these are the reasons why all the reproductive health problem were accepted as what the teacher could do to prevent adolescent school girl reproductive health problems. The null hypothesis of no significant different on the role of teachers based on gender was not significant so it was accepted. Also null hypotheses of no significant difference on the role of teachers based on their school type was also not significant so it was accepted.

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## Conclusion

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

- Adolescent school girl has so many reproductive health problems which needs to be Critically addressed by both parents and teachers and they include; problems arising from puberty onset, Growth spurt and body changes, issues related to personal hygiene, Breast enlargement, menstruation and issues related to menstruation and sexually transmitted Infections. Teachers and parents also agreed that they are problems associated with adolescent girls. Some literature reviewed in the study also confirmed the findings of the study as being the same.
- The findings of this study also looked at the roles of teachers and parents putting into consideration their gender. The parents agreed with almost all the role pointed out as their duty towards the adolescent girl in preventing reproductive health issues: but do not agree with influencing adolescent girls attitude in firming sexual relationship parent also disagreed with either male parent or female parent being solely responsible for this role or more qualified than the other.
- For the teachers they accepted almost all the roles but differ in educating about contraceptive pregnancy testing and abortion. They proved undecided whether the male teachers are more qualified to educate these adolescent girls in order to prevent these reproductive health problems.

## Implication of the Study

This study has shown from its findings that adolescent school girl has variety of reproductive health problems as reflected in the level of agreement. The study also showed that adolescent school girl has variety of reproductive health problems as reflected in the level of agreement. The study also showed that parents and teacher has many roles and important role to play in preventing adolescent school girls' reproductive health problems.

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## Recommendation

The following recommendations were made based on the finding and conclusion of the study.

1. Parents and Teachers should look into discovering more reproductive health problems among adolescent school girls.
2. Due to the explosion in internet facilities and the misinformation they give, there is need for parents and teachers to step up in addressing misinformation as it concerns reproductive health.
3. Whether male or female parent, parents has the responsibility of educating and preventing reproductive health problems in adolescent school girl. So they find time and devote it to educating them.
4. Whether male or female teacher, teachers are supposed to be role models in educating and preventing reproductive health problems in adolescent school girl.

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