



A Descriptive Study to Assess Sexual Assertiveness among Adolescent Girls in Selected Schools of Hisar District, Haryana.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescents face various problems related to sexuality such as reproductive health and hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), menstrual hygiene and sexual abuse. Sexual assertiveness starts with gaining the knowledge of what is meant by appropriate and inappropriate sexual related behavior.

Objectives: 1. To assess the level of Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls studying in selected schools.

2. To find out the association between selected socio-demographic variables and level of Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls studying in selected schools.

Methods: a descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 adolescent girls selected from 2 government senior secondary schools by using multistage cluster sampling. The data was collected using self structured Sexual Assertiveness Scale and the data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results and conclusions: The results revealed that 78% adolescent girls had low sexual assertiveness, 22% had moderate sexual assertiveness and no adolescent girl had high sexual assertiveness. There was significant association between level of Sexual Assertiveness and socio-demographic variables such as family type ($\chi^2 = 4.126$, $p = 0.042$) and age at puberty ($\chi^2 = 39.798$, $p = 0.000$).

Keywords: Sexual Assertiveness, adolescent girls

1 Main text

1.1 Introduction

The period of development of adolescents is roughly in between the ages of 10 and 19 years, which is consistent with the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of adolescence [1]. Adolescence is a phase of transition during which major developmental changes takes place including sexuality. It is the phase during which puberty is attained, which is a major landmark in the development of sexuality and sexuality changes throughout child's life [2]. Adolescents face numerous issues related to sexuality such as reproductive hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), unwanted pregnancies and sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is the prime issue which exposes adolescents especially girls to situations in which they are being used to get sexual gratification from petting, fondling of genitalia, voyeurism, exhibitionism or threatening child to engage in sexual related activities. This abuse leads to severe physical, psychological, and social consequences [3].

According to UNICEF (2022), about 1 in 10 girls under the age of 20, have been forced to get involved in sex or other sex related activities [4]. Adolescent girls need to be assertive in a way that if someone known or unknown person trying to harass them, they should take their stand on it and adopt ways to protect themselves from sexual violence. Sexual assertiveness starts with gaining the knowledge of what is meant by appropriate and inappropriate sexual related behavior. Adolescents especially girls must be provided with sexual assertiveness training to acquire information on the changes in the body, good hygiene practices, prevention of teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, how to say no to unwanted sexual acts and to protect oneself from sexual abuse[5].

1.2 Objectives of study

1. To assess the level of Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls studying in selected schools.
2. To find out the association between selected socio-demographic variables and level of Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls studying in selected schools.

1.3 Operational definitions

- 1. Evaluate:** - It refers to the assessment of level of Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls measured by self Structured Sexual Assertiveness Scale.
- 2. Sexual assertiveness:** - In this study, sexual assertiveness is the correct response to the Likert scale (Sexual Assertiveness Scale) regarding capacity of adolescent girls of being assertive by saying no to any inappropriate sexual advances made by any person and to stand up for herself by preventing sexual abuse.
- 3. Adolescent girls:** - They are the girls who are of age group 13-18 years and studying in 8th to 12th standard in different rural state board schools of Hisar district, Haryana.

1.4 Assumptions

1. The adolescent girls will have low level of Sexual Assertiveness.
2. There will be significant association between selected socio-demographic variables and Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls.

1.5 Materials and methods

The quantitative research approach and descriptive, non-experimental research design was adopted by the researcher for the present study. The study was conducted in two Government Senior Secondary Schools of Hisar district Haryana. The sample for the present study consisted of adolescent girls studying in selected schools and sample size was 100 adolescent girls and they were chosen by adopting multistage cluster sampling through lottery method from the selected schools. The research variable for the study was sexual Assertiveness. The data was collected from the subjects regarding socio-demographic variables and by using self structured Sexual Assertiveness Scale. The tool was assessed for content validity and reliability and then administered to the adolescent girls for data collection. The content validity was obtained from experts of nursing field and reliability was calculated using Karl Pearson's reliability formula which was found to be 0.89. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

1.6 Results and analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to compute the results.

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic variables of adolescent girls

Demographic Variables		Subjects (n=100)	
		f	%
Age (in years)	13-14	32	32
	15-16	33	33
	17-18	35	35
Education Pursuing	8th standard	18	18
	9th standard	20	20
	10th standard	21	21
	11th standard	18	18
	12th standard	23	23
Occupation of the father	Government employee	20	20
	Private employee	44	44
	Self employed	36	36
	Unemployed	0	0
Occupation of the mother	Government employee	7	7
	Private employee	31	31
	Self employed	20	20
	Unemployed	42	42
Education of the father	No formal education	0	0
	8th standard	0	0

	10th standard	26	26
	12th standard	42	42
	Diploma holder	20	20
	Graduate	12	12
	Postgraduate	0	0
Education of the mother	No formal education	0	0
	8th standard	0	0
	10th standard	47	47
	12th standard	26	26
	Diploma holder	15	15
	Graduate	12	12
	Postgraduate	0	0
Family Type	Nuclear	14	14
	Joint	86	86
	Extended	0	0
Per capita income (in Rupees)	≤5,000	0	0
	5,001-10,000	45	45
	10,001-20,000	31	31
	>20,000	24	24
Age of Puberty	Not attained	0	0
	Below 10 years	0	0
	11-13 years	82	82
	14 years and above	18	18
Source of information	Parents	44	44
	Siblings	4	4
	Relatives	7	7
	Friends and peer group	6	6
	Teachers	20	20
	Media	19	19
Previous history of sexual abuse	Yes	0	0
	No	100	100

Table 1 depicts that highest percentage of the adolescent girls (35%) belongs to the age group of 17-18 years of age. Highest percentage of adolescent girls (23%) were studying in 12th standard. Majority of the father's occupation (44%) were doing private job. Highest percentage of the adolescent girls mothers (42%) were homemakers. Highest percentage of the adolescent girls fathers (42%) had studied up to 12th standard. Majority of the adolescent girl's mothers (47%) had up to 10th standard. Majority of the adolescent girls, family type (86%) had joint family. Majority of the adolescent girls, family per capita income (45%) having per capita income of Rs 5,001-10,000. Majority of the adolescent girls (82%) had attained puberty at 11-13 years. Highest percentage of the adolescent girls (44%) had source of information from parents. All the adolescent girls (100%) had no previous history of sexual abuse.

Figure 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Level of Sexual Assertiveness

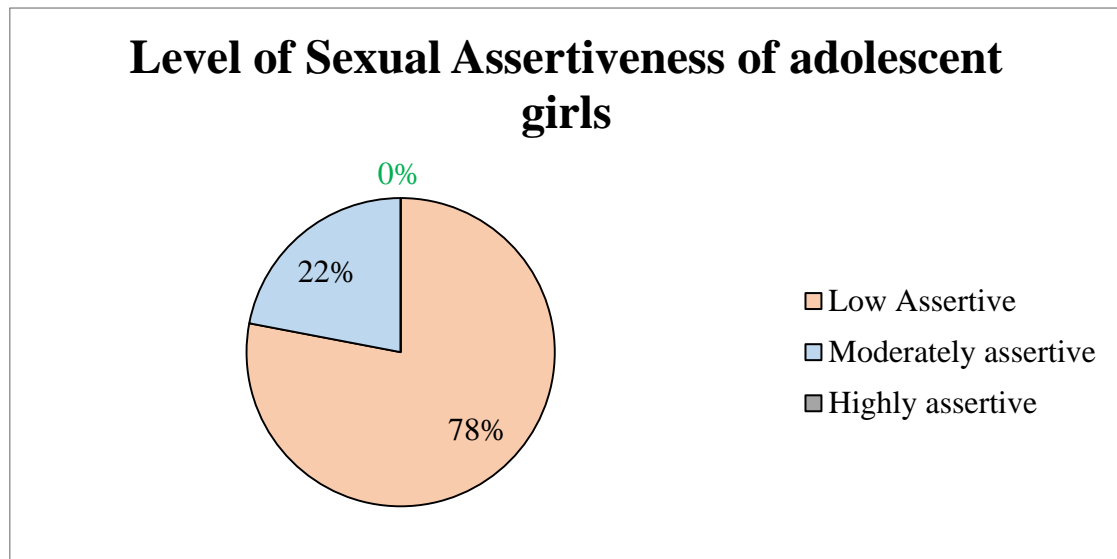


Figure 1 shows that majority of adolescent girls had (78%) low Sexual Assertiveness, 22% had moderate Sexual Assertiveness and no adolescent girl had high Sexual Assertiveness.

Table 2: Description of overall Mean, SD and Mean percentage Sexual Assertiveness Scores of adolescent girls

Sexual Assertiveness	Mean	SD	Mean %
	20.84	4.16	20.84

Table 2 depicts that mean Sexual Assertiveness of adolescent girls was 20.84 ± 4.16 .

Table 3: Association between level of Sexual Assertiveness and socio-demographic variables among adolescent girls.

n= 100

Demographic Variables		Total	Low (78)	Moderate (22)	Chi-Square Test
Age (in years)	13-14	32	23	9	$\chi^2= 1.616$ P=0.445 df= 2
	15-16	33	28	5	
	17-18	35	27	8	
Education Pursuing	8th standard	18	15	3	$\chi^2= 1.216$ P=0.875 df= 4
	9th standard	20	15	5	
	10th standard	21	15	6	
	11th standard	18	14	4	
	12th standard	23	19	4	
Occupation of the father	Government employee	20	15	5	$\chi^2= 0.679$ P=0.711 df= 2
	Private employee	44	34	10	
	Self employed	36	30	6	
Occupation of the mother	Government employee	7	5	2	$\chi^2= 1.552$ P=0.670 df= 3
	Private employee	31	26	5	
	Self employed	20	14	6	
	Unemployed	42	33	9	

Education of the father	10th standard	26	21	5	$\chi^2= 1.332$ P=0.721 df= 3
	12th standard	42	34	8	
	Diploma holder	20	15	5	
	Graduate	12	8	4	
Education of the mother	10th standard	47	38	9	$\chi^2= 0.493$ P=0.920 df= 3
	12th standard	26	20	6	
	Diploma holder	15	11	4	
	Graduate	12	9	3	
Family Type	Nuclear	14	8	6	$\chi^2= 4.126$ P=0.042* df= 1
	Joint	86	70	16	
Per capita in Rupees	5,001-10,000	45	35	10	$\chi^2= 0.660$ P=0.718 df= 2
	10,001-20,000	31	23	8	
	>20,000	24	20	4	
Age of Puberty	11-13 years	82	74	8	$\chi^2= 39.798$ P=0.000*** df= 1
	14 years and above	18	4	14	
Source of information	Parents	44	35	9	$\chi^2= 0.610$ P=0.987 df= 5
	Siblings	4	3	1	
	Relatives	7	5	2	
	Friends and peer group	6	5	1	
	Teachers	20	16	4	
	Media	19	14	5	

*** Significant at 0.001 level (P< 0.001), * Significant at 0.05 level, (P< 0.05)

The data presented in Table 3 portrays that the association between level of Sexual Assertiveness among adolescent girls and the socio-demographic variables. The association was computed using Pearson Chi-square test. There was significant association between level of Sexual Assertiveness and socio-demographic variables such as family type ($\chi^2=4.126$, $p= 0.042$) and age at puberty ($\chi^2 = 39.798$, $p=0.000$).

1.7 Discussion

In the present study, majority (35%) of adolescent girls belonged to the age group of 17-18 years of age and highest percentage (23%) were studying in 12th standard. Majority (82%) of girls had attained puberty at 10-13 years of age. The findings of **Borkar SK et al** are consistent with the present study in which most of the girls (71.03%) attained menarche up to the age of 13 years. The average age at puberty was observed to be in the range of 11 -16 years [6]. The results concluded that in majority (78%) of adolescent girls, low Sexual Assertiveness was found. There was significant association between level of Sexual Assertiveness and socio-demographic variables such as family type ($\chi^2 =4.126$, $p= 0.042$) and age at puberty ($\chi^2 = 39.798$, $p=0.000$) in adolescent girls. The findings of **Giri S. et. al. (2022)** for assessing the knowledge of assertive behavioral response on sexual abuse had consistent results to the present study which also reported that there was a significant association between age of adolescent girls with knowledge on assertive behavioral responses[7].

1.8 Limitations

1. The researcher felt it difficult to take permission from schools due to sensitivity of the topic.
2. Long term follow up was not possible because of scarcity of time.

1.8 Recommendations

On the basis of the present study, following recommendations are to be considered:

- A study can be conducted to assess the long term effect of Sexual Assertiveness Training Program for improving Sexual Assertiveness.
- A similar study can be conducted to assess the level of Sexual Assertiveness among staff nurses.
- A comparative study can be carried out between adolescent girls studying in rural schools and urban schools.

1.9 Financial support

Nil

1.10 Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

1.11 Conclusion

It is concluded from the study findings that majority of adolescent girls had low level of Sexual Assertiveness which needs to be improved with the help of educational teachings or Sexual Assertiveness Training Programs to reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

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