

Extended Abstract

Lillian Ayebale¹

¹ PhD student, Department of population studies Makerere University

Title: Parent child communication of sexual matters and its influence on adolescent sexual reproduction health. A systematic review

Introduction

Sexual and reproductive health problems are considered as the main causes of death, disability and disease among young people in the world, particularly in Africa (Glasier *et al.*, 2006). Adolescents and young people face multiple challenges during their transition to adulthood (Abubakar A Man, Chuks Jonathan Mba, Gloria Quansah Asare, 2015). This transition from childhood to adulthood may last about 15 years, and many young people could acquire significant preventable health problems before reaching adulthood. Most of those problems could persist throughout their adult life (Babalola S, Tambashe BO, 2005), (Olugbenga-Bello *et al.*, 2014).

One of the reasons for this problem is lack of adequate and accurate knowledge about sexual matters. Consequently, risky sexual behaviours such as unprotected sex, multiple sexual partnerships, and transactional sex are common among young people (Babalola S, Tambashe BO, 2005) These behaviours predispose young people to the triple tragedy of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, unwanted teenage pregnancy and unsafe induced abortion (Manu *et al.*, 2015), (Glasier *et al.*, 2006)

Globally interventions aimed at reducing the unacceptably high levels of adolescent pregnancy need to be strengthened (Kachingwe, 2017). Adolescents in Africa are more disproportionately affected by adolescent pregnancy than adolescents in other regions and it is becoming increasingly important to investigate a variety of strategies that can be employed to decrease adolescent pregnancy rates, particularly with regards to their application within the African cultural context (Chandra-Mouli, Camacho and Michaud, 2013).

Research Problem

There have been so many misconceptions about discussing sex issues with the adolescent. In turn adolescents get information from wrong source and this has led to exposure to several risks including the triple tragedy of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, unwanted teenage pregnancy and unsafe induced abortion. The concept of parent-child (including adolescents) communication on sex has been explored in various Western contexts and proven to show some promise, with studies indicating that it does impact positively on adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes (Chandra-Mouli, Camacho and Michaud, 2013), (Kachingwe, 2017) However, studies are still emerging on this concept in the African context, with very few studies available to determine the value and effectiveness of such an approach (Bastien, Kajula

and Muhwezi, 2011a), (Bastien, Kajula and Muhwezi, 2011b). This review was part of literature search and case building for a doctoral concept on parent child communication on sexual matters and its implications on their sexual reproductive health.

Methods

We searched literature on parent child communication and parent adolescent communication on sexual reproductive health issues (including, sex, pregnancy, abortion, contraception and STIs). Studies conducted in sub Saharan Africa and were published in peer reviewed journals between 2005 and 2018 were included in the search. We used Google Scholar, Popline, Pubmed and random google search. Seventeen articles met the selection criteria and were reviewed. Review was based on topics of sexual reproductive health issues i) sex, ii) Pregnancy, iii) abortion and contraception, iv) STIs.

Results

The results show that there many variations in cultures regarding parent child talks on sexual reproductive health issues. Discussions on sexual related matters tend to be delivered in diverse ways including warnings and sometimes-open discussions. The table below shows the summary findings;

Table 1: Summary findings

Search Topic	Summary findings
Parent child communication on sex	<p>Communication on sex is a taboo in most studied populations (Izugbara, 2007)</p> <p>62% thought that their parents are too preoccupied to talk about sex, while 59% believed their parents would argue if they were to talk about sex. 30% thought their mother would think they were interested in experimenting with sex if they were to talk about it, whilst 69% believed their father would get this impression(R.M, A.I and W.N, 2006)</p> <p>A large proportion (80%) of students reported family communication about HIV/AIDS, while 34% of respondents reported discussion about premarital sex with a family member. Although the study specified that the member of the family most often involved in sexuality discussions was the mother (44%), compared to the father (29%). (Musa <i>et al.</i>, 2008)</p> <p>Females preferred receiving sexuality information from their mothers, males preferred fathers. (Gutin <i>et al.</i>, 2014)</p> <p>Early exposure to sex education by mothers was reported to encourage early sexual debut ((Izugbara, 2007)</p> <p>Parents worried that discussions would encourage early sexual experimentation(Izugbara, 2007)</p>

Parent child communication on Pregnancy	Communication is more of instruction than dialogue (Kumi-Kyereme et al., 2007 (Glasier <i>et al.</i> , 2006) (77%) believed that the home was the best place for sexuality education to take place with, 70% believing that it is the responsibility of both parents whereas 38% thought it was the sole responsibility of the mother. Parent-child communication about sexuality was common in families and mainly on same sex basis. It typically consisted of warnings, threats and physical discipline and was triggered by seeing or hearing something a parent perceived as a negative experience (such as a death attributable to HIV and unmarried young person's pregnancy (Wamoyi <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Parent child communication on abortion and contraception	Among male youth in the study, communication about avoiding sex was found to be associated with a lower probability of having had sex (OR = 0.87), while communication about contraceptive use was associated with an increased likelihood of being sexually experienced, among both sexes (OR = 1.25 & OR = 1.23 for males and females, respectively (Shiferaw, Getahun and Asres, 2014)
Parent child communication on STI/HIV	Communication about HIV and AIDs was reported to be influenced by a host of factors including access, agency and ambiguity ((Muhwezi <i>et al.</i> , 2015), (Bastien, Kajula and Muhwezi, 2011b) Students reported significantly more frequent discussion about AIDS with parents and others in the social network (Bastien et al., 2008 parents tend to use fear as a tactic in discussing about sex, and also that parents lack time to engage with their children, and when they do, they use authoritarian or indulgent parenting styles (Musa <i>et al.</i> , 2008) Inadequate knowledge on part of parents was identified as a barrier to communication by respondents (Manu <i>et al.</i> , 2015)

There were several barriers identified in different studies to affect parent child communication including taboos, busy parent schedules, lack of skills and at times lack of child appropriate information. Also young people in most studies expressed fear of their parents and preference to get information from peers and teachers. Although the most studies suggest that information from parents is strongly taken and acted upon by young people. The review also established that parents influence young people's access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, as well as their ability to make healthful decisions. Inadequate parental involvement in preparing young people for safe sexual life and good reproductive health greatly contributes to lack of skills on sexual decision-making.

Adults influence young people's access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services, as well as their ability to make healthful decisions. Inadequate parental involvement in preparing young people for safe sexual life and good reproductive health greatly contributes to

lack of skills on sexual decision making. The timing of communication is also of importance and is most likely to be effective prior to sexual debut to reinforce protective factors, but may also facilitate behavior change in those already sexually active

Ensuring that adolescents can protect their health during each phase of development is a critical global public health priority. Such investments may delay first pregnancy, reduce maternal mortality, improve health outcomes for women and their children, contribute to development goals and reduce poverty.

Conclusions

Whereas there are increasingly a number of substantive studies on parent-child/adolescent communication on sexual reproductive health matters in sub Saharan Africa, the review reveals that there is a need for further research on the subject employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. There is need to explore further the cultural contexts and the further implications on adolescent sexual reproductive health.

References

- Abubakar A Man, Chuks Jonathan Mba, Gloria Quansah Asare, K. O.-A. and R. K. O. A. (2015) 'Parent-child communication about sexual and reproductive health: evidence from the Brong Ahafo region, Ghana', *Reproductive Health*, 12(16).
- Babalola S, Tambashe BO, V. C. (2005) 'Parental factors and sexual risk-taking among young people in Cote d'Ivoire.', *Afr J Reprod Health*, 9(1), pp. 49–65.
- Bastien, S., Kajula, L. and Muhwezi, W. (2011a) 'A review of studies of parent-child communication about sexuality and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa', *Reproductive Health*. BioMed Central Ltd, 8(1), p. 25. doi: 10.1186/1742-4755-8-25.
- Bastien, S., Kajula, L. and Muhwezi, W. (2011b) 'A review of studies of parent-child communication about sexuality and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa', *Reproductive Health*, 8(1), pp. 1–17. doi: 10.1186/1742-4755-8-25.
- Chandra-Mouli, V., Camacho, A. V. and Michaud, P. A. (2013) 'WHO guidelines on preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in developing countries', *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Elsevier Ltd, 52(5), pp. 517–522. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.03.002.
- Glasier, A. *et al.* (2006) *Sexual and reproductive health: a matter of life and death. The Lancet Sexual and Reproductive Health Series*. Available at: <http://www>.
- Gutin, S. A. *et al.* (2014) 'Fertility desires and intentions among HIV-positive women during the post-natal period in Uganda.', *African journal of reproductive health*, 18(3), pp. 67–77. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25438511>.
- Izugbara, C. (2007) *Home-Based Sexuality Education: Nigerian Parents Discussing Sex With Their Children, Youth & Society - YOUTH SOC*. doi: 10.1177/0044118X07302061.
- Kachingwe, ©edith (2017) 'Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) Guidance to Support Country Implementation Annexes 1–6 and Appendices I–IV Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) Guidance to Support Country Implementation', *Geneva: World Health Organization*. Available at: http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/global-aa-ha-annexes.pdf?ua=1.
- Manu, A. A. *et al.* (2015) 'Parent-child communication about sexual and reproductive health: Evidence from the Brong Ahafo region, Ghana', *Reproductive Health*, 12(1), pp. 1–13. doi: 10.1186/s12978-015-0003-1.
- Muhwezi, W. W. *et al.* (2015) 'Perceptions and experiences of adolescents, parents and school administrators regarding adolescent-parent communication on sexual and reproductive health issues in urban and rural Uganda Adolescent Health', *Reproductive Health*. *Reproductive Health*, 12(1), pp. 1–16. doi: 10.1186/s12978-015-0099-3.
- Musa, O. *et al.* (2008) *Family Communication on HIV/AIDS among Secondary School Students in a Northern State of Nigeria, African Journal of Infectious Diseases*. doi: 10.4314/ajid.v2i1.42090.

Olugbenga-Bello, A. I. *et al.* (2014) 'Health risk behaviors and sexual initiation among in-school adolescents in rural communities in southwestern Nigeria.', *International journal of adolescent medicine and health*, 26(4), pp. 503–10. doi: 10.1515/ijamh-2013-0326.

R.M, M., A.I, S. and W.N, O. (2006) *Parents-adolescents communication and HIV/AIDS in Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria*, *Journal of Medical Sciences*. doi: 10.3923/jms.2006.537.545.

Shiferaw, K., Getahun, F. and Asres, G. (2014) 'Assessment of adolescents' communication on sexual and reproductive health matters with parents and associated factors among secondary and preparatory schools' students in Debremarkos town, North West Ethiopia.', *Reproductive health*, 11(1), p. 2. doi: 10.1186/1742-4755-11-2.

Wamoyi, J. *et al.* (2010) 'Parent-child communication about sexual and reproductive health in rural Tanzania : Implications for young people ' s sexual health interventions', pp. 1–18.