



# ADOLESCENT SEXUAL HEALTH IN KISII COUNTY: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

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## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- Adolescent health remains underserved in many areas of the world. Approximately 198 million young adults aged 15-24 years live in Sub-Saharan Africa and adolescents (10-19 years) comprise of 24% of the Kenyan population.
- They are particularly vulnerable to sexual health issues including early and unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, female genital mutilation, child marriages, sexual violence, and sexual transmitted infections including HIV (9%).
- Given the significant impact that sexual health plays in health, we sought to understand adolescent sexual health and behaviors in Kisii.

## METHODOLOGY

**Study design:** Community based mixed methods research.

**Study population** Primary and secondary school students, teachers, community health volunteers and caregivers in the community.

**Study location:** Nduru sub county in Kisii county.

**Study period:** May 2016 to July 2016.

**Methodology:** We collected data using hospital registers at Kisii Teaching and Referral hospital, Interviewed 20 households, conducted questionnaires and focus groups with 218 and 210 primary (class 7 and 8) and secondary (form 1 to 4) students respectively. We conducted key informant interviews with 11 school administrators and focus groups with 47 teachers and 21 community health volunteers.

**Data analysis:** Major themes identified from qualitative and quantitative data analysed using Microsoft excel.

## RESULTS

- In 2014-2015, adolescent mothers at Kisii Referral Hospital accounted for 12% of deliveries, 4% of antenatal clinic and 3% of family planning clinic patients.
- Caregivers felt schools (65%) and church (60%) are best places for children to be taught about reproductive health.
- Sexual debut was reported by 36% of girls and 23% of boys in a rural primary school and in 49% of girls and 67% of boys in a mixed secondary school.

Fig 1: Best sources of sexual health education as reported by caregivers

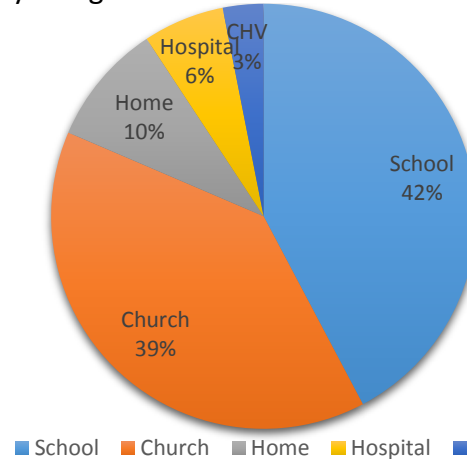


Fig 2: Sources of sexual education among adolescent mothers (n=8)

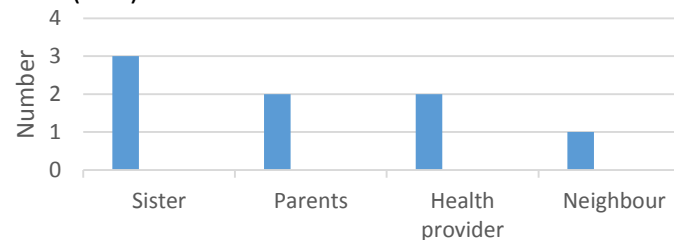


Table 1: Reported challenges and solutions for adolescent sexual education interventions.

Group	Challenges	Solution
Community health volunteers	Difficulty in communicating with adolescents.	Involve the parents in addressing SRH topics
Parents	Discussing sex is a taboo.	Respected community leaders should educate community about rationale of education
Teachers	Minimal time allocated to life skills	Increase time devoted to life skills training

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve access to youth friendly services
- Start a school-based outreach counseling program to remove barriers to accessing sexual education.

## CONCLUSIONS

Adolescents are underutilizing preventative reproductive health services relative to their burden of pregnancy and delivery. A concerted effort to improve life skills and reproductive health education at all levels of the community may provide greater impact on the lives of adolescents.

## REFERENCES

- Murray CJL. Shifting to sustainable development goals- implications for global health. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2015;373:1390-1393.
- Kirby DB et al. Sex and HIV education programs: their impact on sexual behavior of young people throughout the world. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2007;40:206-207

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