

Correlates of Sexual Violence Among Married Couples in Nigeria

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Abstract

Sexual violence is of a global public health concern. However, population-based studies of its correlates are limited in Nigeria. There are fewer studies that have made use of couple data, the few studies that have focused on the issue of sexual violence have mostly used data for women. The patriarchal nature of our country makes it vital to make use of couple data. The paper therefore sets to fill this gap. The results showed that there is sexual violence in 5% of the marital unions. It cuts across all strata of the society. The logistic regression results showed that religion, employment status of wife, number of times been married by the Husband, wealth quintile, a history of family violence by the woman are factors that significantly affects the chances of experiencing intimate partner sexual violence. The controlling issues exercised by husbands are also significant correlates of sexual violence. This has implications for the rights of women in a patriarchal society like Nigeria. The results underscore the need to prevent its incidence. It is pertinent for men to be targeted as more emphasis are placed on addressing the root causes of their controlling behaviours as well as the issue of alcohol use. There is also the need to build the capacity of young girls and adolescents to have appropriate negotiating and communication skills before entry into the marriage institutions.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Women, Couples, Marital Union

1. Introduction

Violence against women is a foremost health and human rights concern. It is a common plague that takes place in public and private spaces (UN Women, 2015). Violence against women and girls occurs in every country and culture, and is entrenched in social and cultural attitudes and norms that privilege male over female (WHO, 2012). The United Nations defines violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life' (WHO, 2014). The most common form of violence against women globally is that perpetrated by their partners (Heise, 2011). It has been estimated that at least 30 per cent of women above 15 years have experienced intimate partner violence at least once in their life time (WHO, 2014). Indeed, in sub-Saharan Africa, at least one third of the women are affected by intimate partner violence (McCloskey, et. al., 2016). The situation in Nigeria is such that every woman can expect to be a victim of a form of violence or the other at some point in her life (Okemgbo et al., 2002). Intimate partner violence (IPV) could be physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, or financial in nature and it occurs between intimate partners (Sprague et al, 2016). The focus of this paper is on sexual violence)

Sexual Violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting." (WHO, 2013). Central to sexual violence is the deliberate use of sex as a weapon to demonstrate power, and to inflict pain and sometimes humiliation upon another person. It is gruesome when this take place between two people who are in a relationship where there should be love and caring for one another. This is often due to the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society. Patriarchy is a power system organised around male authority and male privilege, it indeed constitutes a form of structural violence against women (Benoit et al, 2015). Sexual violence is most often committed by someone known to the victim (Vaillancourt, 2010), and this paper focuses on intimate partner sexual violence among women in marital unions.

When research and public documents fail to distinguish between various forms of violence, it is difficult to understand the factors that make sexual violence a distinct issue requiring a tailored public response (Benoit et al, 2015). Sexual violence is often under-reported due to the perception that it is crowded in shame, embarrassment of being judged, blamed or not even believed (Johnson, 2012). It becomes less obvious when it takes place in a marital union, especially in marriages solemnised in Churches where the couple make vows with one another about the other have rule of the boy of the partner. The issue is whether an individual should not respect the rights of the other just because they are in a marital union.

The factors that are associated with intimate partner sexual violence occur within individuals, families, and the society in general (WHO, 2014). Sexual violence is not limited to a certain age, culture, or socioeconomic status (Cherniack et al., 2005; Naved and Persson, 2005; Krug et al., 2002). Thus, there is the need to examine the correlates of sexual violence against Nigerian women in marital dyads.

The importance of establishing the prevalence of intimate partner sexual violence is very crucial to addressing women's health and development (McCloskey et al., 2005). Evidence shows that there is a lack of data on sexual

violence in the context of intimate partnership (Benoit et al, 2015). Some of the risk factors for perpetrating and experiencing intimate partner sexual violence include: lower levels of education, exposure to child maltreatment, witnessing family violence, harmful use of alcohol, attitudes that are accepting of violence and gender inequality (WHO, 2014).

Socioeconomic factors have a limited role in explaining vulnerability to intimate partner sexual violence (McInturff, 2013). Age of the woman, the type of marriage, level of education, wealth status and geographical region have been found to have significant effect on intimate partner sexual violence (Koenig et al, 2006; Wagman, et al, 2012; Jewkes, et al, 2002). According to Ruiz-Perez *et al.* (2006), an unemployed woman is significantly likely to experience sexual violence. Koenig *et al.* (2006) found that higher levels of education among husbands were significantly negatively associated with intimate partner violence. Spousal age difference is an important variable in patriarchal settings, the larger the spousal age difference, the more difficult it may be for wives to express views contrary to their husband's and where this happens it engenders intimate partner violence (Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005).

Witnessing of violence between parents as a child emerges a strong predictor of subsequent intimate partner sexual violence (Abeya, et al, 2011; Kwagala, et al, 2013). Witnessing parental violence during childhood is associated with re-victimization and an intergenerational cycle of violence for both girls and boys (Jewkes, et al, 2002; Abeya, et al, 2011).

The specific aims of the paper are to: explore the nature and prevalence of sexual violence against women; investigate the factors enhancing it; and make policy recommendations on ways of mitigating the incidence of sexual violence.

2.Data and Methods

The data for this paper was derived from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey [NDHS] 2013, accessed with permission from the Measure DHS Program website. The NDHS 2013 is the fourth survey of its kind, it is a cross-sectional nationally representative survey that used a stratified three-stage cluster design based on the sampling frame the list of enumeration areas (EAs) prepared for the 2006 Population Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. A detailed description of the sampling procedure was reported in the NDHS 2013 report (National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF International 2014). The DHS provides insightful information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics at both household and individual levels. The survey used three questionnaires which were based on the internationally accepted model questionnaires but were modified to take cognisance of Nigeria's requirement: The Household Questionnaire, the Woman's Questionnaire, and the Man's Questionnaire. The questionnaire for the Woman and the Man was directed at those age 15-49, but the men were selected in every second household in the NDHS 2013 sample. There was no household from which more than a man and a woman were selected. A subsample of one eligible woman in each household was randomly selected to be asked additional questions regarding domestic violence. The Couple¹ data was specifically used for this paper; the data was further streamlined to couples in which the woman was interviewed for the Domestic Violence Module. This is because the focus of this study is on sexual violence in marital unions.

Measures of outcome variable

Sexual violence was captured by asking the woman the following questions: Does (did) your (last) husband/partner ever:

- a) Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?
- b) Physically force you to perform any other sexual acts you did not want to?
- c) Force you with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts you did not want to?

When the respondents give a "yes" answer to one or more of the above constitutes evidence of sexual violence. The questions were with reference to within the last 12 months before the survey.

Statistical analyses

Frequency distributions was used to describe the characteristics of the couple, the husband and wife. Cross-tabulations with Pearson's chi-square tests were used to examine the associations between sexual violence in marital unions and the socio-demographic characteristics of the union and the members of the union. The level of statistical significance using p-values was set at $p < 0.05$. Multivariate analysis using binary Logistic regression was finally used to examine the correlates and predictors of sexual violence in marital unions. The explanatory variables were included after a test of parsimony, that is only those variables whose p-values were less than 0.05 during the chi-square tests were included in the logistic model. The results of the logistic regression are presented in the form of Odds Ratios (OR) and their 95% confidence intervals.

¹ There were 8,658 couples interviewed, but 6986 were interviewed for the DV module

3. Findings

Table 1 Percent distribution of respondents by selected background characteristics

Characteristics	Husband (n=6950)	Wife (n=6950)
Age		
15-19	0.2	10.6
20-24	4.4	20.2
25-29	14.5	27.5
30-34	20.6	19.8
35-39	23.1	14.0
40-44	19.2	6.0
45-49	17.9	1.8
<i>Mean Age (In Years)</i>	<i>36.12</i>	<i>28.19</i>
Education level attained		
No Education	30.5	42.8
Primary	21.9	20.0
Secondary	32.6	29.2
Higher	15.0	8.0
Currently working	98.7	68.4
Religion		
Catholic	8.1	7.3
Other Christian	33.3	34.7
Islam	56.8	56.3
Others	1.9	1.6
Number of Unions		
Once	70.8	91.1
More than Once	27.8	7.9
No Response	1.8	1.0
Fidelity to Spouse		
Not Faithful	98.5	5.2
Faithful	1.5	94.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Number of couples		6950

Source: NDHS, 2013

The husbands are on the average older than their wives. The proportion of men with at least secondary education is higher than the proportion of women with at least same level of education. Table 1 shows that a higher proportion of females than males do not have any formal education. Virtually all the husbands are working with only about two-thirds of the wives working. There appears to be some level of freedom to religious beliefs even among couples as there are differences in the proportion of husbands and wives indicating various religions. At least 90 per cent of the wives are in their first marital union while more of the husbands have been married more than once, this may be due to polygyny. Faithfulness in marital union was measured by examining the relationship with the last three sexual partners of the man and the woman in the last 12 months preceding the survey. An individual is faithful when he or she has only had sexual relationships only with the spouse in the last 12 months preceding the survey, which indicates fidelity in marital unions. The level of infidelity by the husbands is worrisome in that about 99 per cent of the husbands had sexual relationships with a woman not their spouse at least once in the last 12 months preceding the survey. The reverse is the case among the wives. The behaviour of the husbands portends great danger to the country's quest to reverse and halt the spread of Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections.

Table 2: Couple Characteristics in Marital union

	Total
Type of Union	
Monogamous	81.9
Polygynous	18.1
Place of Residence	
Urban	34.6
Rural	65.4
Age difference	
Wife older than husband	2.0
Husband 0-4yrs older than wife	23.4
Husband 5-9yrs older than wife	40.5
Husband 10-14yrs older than wife	22.5
Husband at least 15yrs older than wife	11.6
Education disparity between Couple	
Both no education	27.2
Both have same level of education	31.2
Wife more educated than Husband	10.4
Husband more educated than wife	31.2
Geopolitical zone	
North-Central	16.9
North-East	19.1
North-West	30.5
South-East	6.2
South-South	12.9
South-West	14.4
Wealth Quintile	
Poorest	21.0
Poorer	21.4
Middle	17.9
Richer	19.3
Richest	20.4
Mutual fidelity to partner in last 12 months	
Not faithful	98.5
Faithful to partner	1.5
Wife witnessing father ever beating her mother	9.6
Controlling issues	
Husband jealous if wife talks with other men	58.7
Husband accuses wife of unfaithfulness	9.0
Husband does not permit wife to meet female friends	10.2
Husband tries to limit wife's contact with family	6.3
Husband insists on knowing where wife is	38.7
Number of Couples	6950

Source: NDHS, 2013

As shown in Table 2, about four-fifths of the couples are in monogamous unions, with about two-thirds of the couples residing in the rural areas. Majority of the husbands are at least five years older than their wives. It is only in one-tenth of the unions that the wife has higher level of education than the husband. At least 31 per cent of the couples are in unions where both the husband and wife have same level of education. There is said to be mutual fidelity between a couple when both have not engaged in sexual relationship with another person different from their spouse in the last 12 months preceding the survey. As may be expected mutual fidelity is low mostly due to the behaviours of the husbands. Just about 10 percent of the wives witnessed physical violence against their mothers while growing-up. More than half of the husbands are jealous when their wives talk with other men. This may be an indication of what such men do when they are talking with other women or females. Also about 39 per cent of the husbands will always want to know the exact whereabouts of their wives, these are the two most common controlling issues reported by their wives.

Prevalence of Sexual violence by Background Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3: Incidence of Sexual violence by Selected characteristics of Husband and wife

	Incidence of Sexual Violence in Marital Union			p-value
	None	Yes	Total	
Age of Husband				
15-19	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.876
20-24	4.4	5.2	4.4	
25-29	14.4	16.2	14.5	
30-34	20.6	21.4	20.6	
35-39	23.2	21.1	23.1	
40-44	19.2	19.4	19.2	
45-49	18.0	16.5	17.9	
Mean Age (<i>in Years</i>)	36.14	35.73		
Age of Wife				
15-19	10.6	11.8	10.6	0.444
20-24	20.4	17.1	20.2	
25-29	27.5	28.3	27.5	
30-34	19.6	22.5	19.8	
35-39	14.1	11.8	14.0	
40-44	6.0	6.9	6.0	
45-49	1.8	1.4	1.8	
Mean Age (<i>in Years</i>)	28.19	36.14		
Education level attained by Husband				
No Education	30.6	27.5	30.5	0.260
Primary	21.7	26.0	21.9	
Secondary	32.6	32.4	32.6	
Higher	15.0	14.2	15.0	
Education level attained by Wife				
No Education	43.1	37.9	42.8	0.001
Primary	19.7	27.2	20.0	
Secondary	29.1	30.3	29.2	
Higher	8.1	4.6	8.0	
Religion of Husband				
Catholic	7.9	11.8	8.1	0.000
Other Christian	33.0	38.2	33.3	
Islam	57.3	46.8	56.8	
Traditionalists	1.2	3.2	1.3	
Others	0.6	0.0	0.6	
Religion of Wife				
Catholic	7.0	12.2	7.3	0.000
Other Christian	34.8	39.1	35.0	
Islam	57.2	47.2	56.7	
Traditionalists	0.9	1.4	0.9	
Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Number of Times Wife has been Married				
Once	91.3	86.1	91.1	0.000
More than once	7.6	13.6	7.9	
Not stated	1.0	0.3	1.0	
Number of Times Husband has been Married				
Once	72.2	64.6	71.8	0.002
More than once	27.8	35.4	28.2	
Employment status of Husband				
Not working	0.9	1.2	0.9	0.804
Working	98.7	98.3	98.7	
Not stated	0.4	0.6	0.4	

	Incidence of Sexual Violence in Marital Union			p-value
	None	Yes	Total	
Employment status of Wife				
Not working	31.4	27.2	31.2	0.00
Working	68.3	70.5	68.4	
Not stated	0.3	2.3	0.4	
Husband's use of alcohol	17.9	30.6	18.5	0.00
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Number of couples	6604	346	6950	

Source: NDHS, 2013

The results in Table 3 show that there was incidence of sexual violence in about 5 per cent of the marital unions. The prevalence of sexual violence cuts across the various age groups but highest among husbands who are age 30-39years and women who are 25-34years. The age of the husband or wife do not have a significant effect on incidence of sexual violence in a marital union. Husbands with secondary level of education are most likely to perpetrate sexual violence against their wives while wives without formal education are most prone to sexual violence in their marriage. It is only the level of education of a wife that showed some level of significance on incidence of sexual violence in a marital union. Religion have significant effect on the incidence of sexual violence with Muslims husbands being in more of the marital unions in which there is incidence of sexual violence than others, similarly Muslim women are the highest of those in unions in which there is sexual violence. Incidence of sexual violence is higher among couples in their first marriage. There is more incidence of sexual violence in unions where the couple are working. The use of alcohol by the husband is likely to affect the incidence of sexual violence in marital unions. This is because in about 31 per cent of the unions that there is the incidence of sexual violence, husbands in such unions use alcohol.

Table 4: Couple Characteristics by Incidence of Sexual violence in Marital union

	Incidence of Sexual Violence		Total	p-value
	None	Yes		
Type of Union				
Monogamous	82.1	77.7	81.9	0.039
Polygynous	17.9	22.3	18.1	
Place of Residence				
Urban	35.3	21.7	34.6	0.000
Rural	64.7	78.3	65.4	
Geopolitical zone				
North-Central	17.0	15.3	16.9	0.000
North-East	17.1	56.1	19.1	
North-West	31.8	6.4	30.5	
South-East	6.2	5.2	6.2	
South-South	13.0	12.4	12.9	
South-West	14.9	4.6	14.4	
Wealth Quintile				
Poorest	20.7	25.7	21.0	0.000
Poorer	21.1	26.6	21.4	
Middle	17.7	21.1	17.9	
Richer	19.5	16.8	19.3	
Richest	21.0	9.8	20.4	
Education disparity between Couple				
Both no education	27.5	21.4	27.2	0.013
Both have same level of education	8.1	10.4	31.2	
Wife more educated than Husband	17.4	16.2	10.4	
Husband more educated than wife	5.7	3.2	31.2	
Age difference				
Wife older than husband	2.0	3.5	2.0	0.314
Husband 0-4yrs older than wife	23.5	2.5	23.4	
Husband 5-9yrs older than wife	40.4	42.2	40.5	
Husband 10-14yrs older than wife	22.6	21.4	22.5	
Husband at least 15yrs older than wife	11.6	10.4	11.6	

	Incidence of Sexual Violence		Total	p-value
	None	Yes		
Mutual fidelity to partner in last 12 months				
Not faithful	98.5	98.6	98.5	0.971
Faithful to partner	1.5	1.4	1.5	
Wife witnessing father ever beating her mother	8.7	26.9	9.6	0.000
Controlling issues				
Husband jealous if wife talks with other men	57.4	83.8	58.7	0.000
Husband accuses wife of unfaithfulness	7.9	28.6	9.0	0.000
Husband does not permit wife to meet female friends	9.1	32.4	10.2	0.000
Husband tries to limit wife's contact with family	5.4	24.9	6.3	0.000
Husband insists on knowing where wife is	37.0	72.3	38.7	0.000
Median Number of controlling issues by husband	1.00	2.00		
Number of Couples	6604	346	6950	

Source: NDHS, 2013

The results in Table 4 show the relationships between couple characteristics and the incidence of sexual violence within the marital union. The incidence of sexual violence is higher in monogamous unions than in polygynous unions. The type of marital union a woman is may predispose her to experiencing sexual violence. There is a higher incidence of sexual violence among couples residing in the rural areas. Incidence of sexual violence in marital unions is highest in the North-east geopolitical zone and lowest in the South-west. The incidence of sexual violence is most pronounced in poor households. Women in unions where both the husband and wife do not have any formal education experienced sexual violence the most. A woman who is married to a husband with higher level of education than her is less likely to experience sexual violence in her marriage than a woman with higher level of education than her husband. Spousal age difference does not have any significant effect on the incidence of sexual violence in marital unions. Similarly, mutual fidelity of the couple does not have significant effect on the incidence of sexual violence. A woman who witnesses her father beating the mother is significantly likely to experience sexual violence in her marriage. There is incidence of sexual violence in at least 4 out of every 5 marital unions in which the husband feels jealous when the wife talks with other men. Similarly, there is intimate partner sexual violence in marriages in which the husband always wants to know where his wife is at any point in time. In marital unions where there is the incidence of sexual violence the median number of controlling issues is 2 while it is 1 in marital unions where there is no sexual violence.

Factors Enhancing Sexual Violence

Table 5: Multivariate Analysis of the Predictors of Sexual Violence in Marital Unions in Nigeria

	Model		95% C.I for Odds Ratio	
	B	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Age of Wife				
Below 25 (r)				
25-29	0.315	1.371	0.953	1.972
30-34	0.613*	1.846	1.188	2.869
35-39	0.313	1.368	0.802	2.334
40-44	0.916	2.500	1.312	4.764
45-49	-0.127*	0.880	0.284	2.727
Age of Husband				
Below 25 (r)				
25-29	-0.039	0.961	0.532	1.736
30-34	-0.246	0.782	0.422	1.450
35-39	-0.563	0.569	0.298	1.089
40-44	-0.500	0.607	0.307	1.199
45-49	-0.624	0.536	0.258	1.113
Times Married by wife				
Once (r)				
More than once	0.062	1.064	0.725	1.562
Times Married by Husband				
Once (r)				
More than once	0.278 ⁺	1.320	1.001	1.741
Employment Status of Wife				
Not working	-0.343 ⁺	0.710	0.537	0.938
Working (r)				

	Model		95% C.I for Odds Ratio	
	B	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Husband use alcohol				
No (r)				
Yes	0.438*	1.549	1.141	2.103
Witness father ever beat her mother				
Yes	1.051*	2.860	2.116	3.864
No (r)				
Geopolitical zone				
North-Central	0.304	1.356	0.752	2.444
North-East	1.606*	4.985	2.795	8.893
North-West	-0.686	0.504	0.250	1.013
South-East (r)				
South-South	0.116	1.122	0.618	2.038
South-West	-0.687	0.503	0.244	1.037
Wealth Quintile				
Poorest	0.264	1.303	0.796	2.132
Poorer	0.330	1.392	0.868	2.234
Middle	0.558 ⁺	1.748	1.109	2.754
Richer	0.365	1.441	0.917	2.264
Richest (r)				
Husband jealous if wife talks with other men				
Yes	0.433 ⁺	1.542	1.106	2.149
No (r)				
Husband accuses wife of unfaithfulness				
Yes	0.662*	1.939	1.429	2.632
No (r)				
Husband does not permit wife to meet female friends				
Yes	0.357 ⁺	1.429	1.037	1.968
No (r)				
Husband tries to limit wife's contact with family				
Yes	0.643*	1.903	1.337	2.708
No (r)				
Husband insists on knowing where wife is				
Yes	0.756*	2.130	1.611	2.816
No (r)				
Constant	-4.918	0.007		
-2 Log likelihood		2128.895*		
Nagelkerke R square		0.262*		
Number of Couples		6950		
Classification		95.1		

Source: NDHS, 2013

+ p <0.05; * p <0.01

Logistic regression¹ is used to determine the factors that have effect on a woman's risk of experiencing sexual violence in a marital union. The results of the Logistic regression (Table 5) show that women age 30-34 years are significantly about one and four-fifth times more likely to experience intimate partner sexual violence relative to those below 25 years. It should be noted that it is within the age range 30 to 34 that issues of contraception, when to have sex and choice of having more children are prominent, which may explain why women in this age range have significantly higher odds of experiencing intimate partner violence. While women age 45-49 years are significantly 88 per cent less likely to experience intimate partner sexual violence relative to those below 25 years. Though the age of the husband does not have significant effect on the chances of incidence of sexual violence, older men are less likely to perpetrate intimate partner sexual violence against their wives relative to those below

¹ The Logistic regression is useful for situations in which one wants to be able to predict the presence or absence of a characteristic or outcome based on values of a set of predictor variables.

25years.

Women whose husbands have been married more than once are significantly one and three-tenth times likely to experience intimate partner sexual violence in such a marriage relative to those whose husbands are in their first marriage. Women who are not working are 71 per cent less likely to experience sexual violence in their marriage relative to those women that are working. This may be because women who are not working may be economically dependent on their husbands for family and personal needs.

Women in marital unions in which the husband uses alcohol are at least one and a half times as likely to experience sexual violence in such unions relative to those whose husbands do not use alcohol. Women who witnessed her father beating the mother are about thrice more likely to experience sexual violence in their marriage relative to those who never witnessed physical violence against their mothers while growing-up.

Married women resident in the North-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria are significantly about five times more likely to experience sexual violence in their marriages relative to married women resident in the South-east geopolitical zone. Though not significant but married women resident in either the North-west or South-west geopolitical zone are about 50 per cent less likely to experience intimate partner sexual violence relative to their counterparts in the South-east geopolitical zone. Married women whose households are in the middle of the wealth quintile are one and three-quarter times as likely to experience sexual violence in their marriages relative to those whose households are in the richest quintile. Women in the poorest households have the lowest odds of experiencing sexual violence.

In terms of the controlling issues, all the five issues in this study have significant effect on the likelihood of incidence of intimate partner sexual violence in a marital union. Married women in a union in which the husband feels jealous when she is talking to another male are significantly one and a half times likely to experience sexual violence in such a marriage relative to the women whose husbands are not jealous of them talking to another male. Married women whose husbands accuse them of unfaithfulness are significantly twice as likely to experience sexual violence than those married women not accused of unfaithfulness. Women in marital unions in which their husbands do not permit them to meet their female friends are significantly one and two-fifth times as likely to experience sexual violence relative to the women whose husbands allow them to meet their female friends.

Some husbands try to limit the wife's contact with her family as a controlling measure, women in such marital unions are significantly about twice as likely to experience sexual violence relative to wives whose contact with their family is not limited by the husband. Similarly, women in marital unions where the husband insists on knowing where the wife are significantly two and one-tenth times as likely to experience sexual violence relative to the wives that are not stalked by their husbands.

4.Limitations

The experience of sexual violence was measured in the context of the 12 months before the survey and not for the life time of the respondents. The fact that a woman did not experience sexual violence in the past 12 months does not imply that such a woman has never experienced any acts of sexual violence, or that she is precluded from experiencing sexual violence in the future. Also, like in many studies of this nature, the study may not have accurately measured the number of women who have been abused, but rather the number of women who are willing to disclose abuse. The fact that the data for this study are cross-sectional, temporal relationship between sexual violence and a covariate measuring an event that clearly predates its occurrence cannot be established. Also, the cross-sectional design of the data required relying on respondents' ability to recall violent experiences and on respondents' willingness to disclose this information.

5.Conclusions

The findings confirm the fact that sexual violence cuts across age, status, and education as in many other places. Sexual violence seems to be lowest in unions in which the woman has some level of tertiary education. Nevertheless, there are reasons for concern when a woman is married to a husband with lower level of education than hers. This could be due to cultural stereotypic attitudes and expectations on the part of the man about the subservience of woman to man. Thus, patriarchy may be at the core of the reasons for the incidence of sexual violence. Though there is more sexual violence in monogamous unions but there is also more sexual violence in unions where either the husband or the wife is in at least a second marriage.

Sexual violence is not limited to urban areas, it is even higher among those resident in the rural areas. The fact that women who are not working being less likely to experience sexual violence leads to some level of worry and anxiety, for this is an indication of the prevailing gender power play and that even when women are working, their husbands could still make them to engage in sexual intercourse against her will. This is a barometer of how far we have gone as a country in achieving the Beijing Declaration among other international development aspirations.

That a history of family violence us a risk factor for gender-based violence in general and sexual violence has long been established and the violence is passed on from one generation to another (Dalal and Lindqvist, 2012).

More importantly that husbands still exert many controlling issues over their wives, this again has implications for the rights of women in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, coupled with the religious and cultural beliefs about the marriage institution.

6.Recommendations

The focus of the recommendations is the prevention of the incidence of sexual violence. The issue of sexual violence in intimate relationships need be tackled at different levels. The intervention to mitigate the incidence of sexual violence must not be limited to the urban areas, the rural areas must be strategically focussed upon. It is pertinent for men to be targeted as more emphasis are placed on addressing the root causes of their controlling behaviours as well as the issue of alcohol use. There is also the need to build the capacity of young girls and adolescents to have appropriate negotiating and communication skills before entry into the marriage institutions.

Patriarchy is at the heart of the controlling behaviours of husbands as such, there should be public awareness and enlightenment campaigns to target the entire communities to encourage respect for the right of every citizen.

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