

Abstract

NMA/AGSM/2022/PUBH/008 - Prevalence of Sexual and Gender Based Violence: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Communities in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a major public health challenge and victims are prone to physical, psychological, emotional, and social trauma. Evidence that rural and urban areas differ in several respects exists. The aim of this study was to compare the prevalence of SGBV in rural and urban communities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology: A total of 746 consenting respondents, 376 rural and 370 urban residents were recruited using a multi-stage sampling technique from Obio/Akpor and Emohua local government areas. Participants comprised youths between 15-35 years who had lived for ≥ 6 months in the study area. Pretested semi-structured interviewer-administered questionnaire adapted from the WHO Violence Against Women Instrument was used. The prevalence of SGBV in rural and urban areas was determined and compared using the Chi-square test. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Respondents comprised of 343(46%) males and 403(54%) females with a mean age of 23.88 ± 6.14 years from 8 communities. Overall SGBV prevalence of 85.9% and 79.5% among rural and urban residents respectively was observed. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2=5.416$; $p=0.020$). There were also statistically significant differences in the prevalence of physical violence (rural-67.3%|urban-58.9%), sexual violence (rural-72.6%|urban-64.9%), socioeconomic violence (rural-52.7%|urban-44.9%) and violence due to harmful traditional practices (rural-39.6%|urban-23.2%).

Conclusion: Although the prevalence of SGBV among rural residents was significantly higher than among urban residents of Obio/Akpor and Emohua LGAs. Overall, SGBV prevalence was remarkably high in this region.

Keywords: Prevalence; Sexual and Gender Based Violence; Rural; Urban; Nigeria.

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