Gender Perspectives and Health literacy proficiencies of In-School Adolescents in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Health literacy proficiency has been linked with positive adolescent health outcomes. Strategies aimed towards improving health literacy have been suggested as a major way of achieving adolescent health and wellbeing. Previous research has identified a nexus between socio-demographics, education and health literacy proficiency. This study therefore, explores existing relationships between gender, socio-economic class and the health literacy proficiency levels of in-school adolescents in Osun State. Mixed method involving questionnaire survey and Focus group discussion were used to obtain data from 1,200 randomly selected in-school adolescents from 12 high schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The survey instrument was an adaptation of the electronic health literacy scale (eHEALS). Results show only 1,186 (98.8%) questionnaire were found analysable. Mean age of respondents was 15 + 0.6 with 616(51.1%) being female. Overall health literacy proficiency was low with only 447(37.7%) having a high level of health literacy proficiency. Quantitative survey shows that both gender and socio-economic background have negative statistically significant relationship with health literacy proficiency. Similarly, FGD revealed that females generally have lower health literacy proficiency when compared with males. The study concludes that gender based interventions for female adolescents could reduce health and educational disparities which will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4 and 5.

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