

Premarital and extramarital sex in Lagos, Nigeria

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In view of the need for information on which to base future interventions on sexual behaviour, this paper examines AIDS awareness and perception, as well as sexual practices among the metropolitan population of Lagos, Nigeria. There is a fairly high but recent level of awareness of AIDS and some scepticism about its incurability. Some high-risk premarital and extramarital sexual patterns are observed. These show the importance to the study of inter-spousal intimacy as well as two other contextually-relevant variables.

The increasing concern over the reported cases of AIDS in Nigeria demands a study of the pattern of sexual behaviour of its population, before or during the time when clearer information and education emerged on the AIDS epidemic and its vector, the human immunodeficiency virus. Such a study would help to ascertain the success or failure rate of interventionist programs introduced to discourage the epidemicity of AIDS.

For West Africa as a whole, except in some potential epicentres, the levels of concern shown toward the epidemic were rather low right from the inception of the anti-AIDS campaigns. This may be ascribed to the relatively low level of AIDS diagnosis, especially when compared to regions within the East African axis, south of the Sahara.

In recent times, however, the numbers of actual diagnoses, as well as the expressed apprehension by governments and public organizations over the state of the AIDS epidemic in Nigerian communities, are becoming a matter for concern. When this is combined with the government-professed knowledge of under-reporting of cases of infection, the reasons behind official apprehension may be better understood.

Indeed, it is apparent that the government wishes to confront, through education, information and communication (IEC) programs the rate at which HIV has been spreading almost imperceptibly among the population. The effect of such programs and the investment outlay may be difficult to assess if basic patterns of sexual behaviour before intervention are not ascertained.

Thus, obtaining the facts on sexual behaviour of studied communities has been a central theme of sexual networking research carried out for most settlements in Nigeria and elsewhere. However, despite a relatively wide coverage in the sexual networking research, Lagos, which is the largest Nigerian city and until recently the capital, has been only partly covered in some studies.¹ Part of the gap in our knowledge is filled by the present study, which is designed to provide reliable reference material against which future changes in the sexual behaviour of the Lagos metropolis may be assessed. Thus, the study analyses premarital and extramarital sexual activity in Lagos based on the data collected in 1990, when the knowledge of AIDS was less clear than now.

¹ The earlier contributions of Orubuloye (1993), Oloko and Omoboye (1993) and a few others, focused only on a section of the metropolitan community, such as prostitutes or adolescents in schools.

To situate the study properly, it is instructive to examine the contemporary perspective of premarital and extramarital sex. Explanations for changes in attitudes to sex have been adduced to the changing cultural practices of many African groups, especially as they relate to family formation and to the relaxation of the control and influence of the family. Such changes towards anomalous sexual behaviour are believed to be stronger in the urban areas than in the rural areas. Irrespective of the environment, it appears that socio-economic characteristics of individuals may lead to some differences in sexual orientation, at least in terms of the prevalence of particular sexual practices.

In this regard, Orubuloye *et al.* (1994a,b), in their study of Ondo, discovered that females' sexual activity, irrespective of marital status, is generally condoned as long as it brings economic benefits. For married women, such benefits should translate to better welfare, primarily for their children, and then for the home as a whole. For the spinster, the rationale lies in the need to meet her educational expenses which she may find difficult to obtain by other means. Such a pattern suggests that economic factors may encourage or discourage anomalous sexual activity.

Within a large urban agglomeration like Lagos, the extent of social networking may influence sexual behaviour to different degrees depending on the characteristics of the dominant subgroups. The consequences of such interactions may modify people's attitudes towards others' anomalous sexual behaviour. For example, the prevailing views concerning extramarital sex among the Yoruba, who are the dominant ethnic group, seem somewhat ambivalent, and perhaps mirror change over time, as reflected by an adage and two contemporary sayings.

The adage *Aa kii mo oko omo ki a tun mo aale e*, 'We should not know (accept) the husband of a daughter and also know (accept) her lover' frowns on extramarital sex by married women. On the other hand, a contemporary saying is *Adelebo to nsasewo atije omo e lo n wa, ewo ni ti eniti koi bimo ti nfaaro e sasewo*, 'a married woman who engages in prostitution seeks for the maintenance of her children; where is the basis for the spinster who invests her youth in prostitution?'. This latter position permits female extramarital sexual laxity on the ground of maternal responsibilities. The other contemporary saying *Oko kan o kun kombodu*, 'one husband cannot satisfactorily furnish a woman's wardrobe', is more lenient towards female extramarital sex and permits it on the grounds of material acquisition by the woman.

By contrast, extramarital sex among the Igbo, who are strongly represented in Lagos especially among the females, seems highly restrained by the group's strong inclination to monogyny, coupled with the very high bride-price which is claimable by the husband in the event of divorce. However, it is becoming fashionable among a subset of the Igbo females to engage in extramarital sex. It is not clear how much this trend is explained by the interaction of the Igbo with other ethnic groups or by educational disparity between Igbo spouses. What is clear is that within the last few years, the residential pattern in Lagos has become ethnically mixed. This pattern is examined in the next section.

Lagos: ethnographic and economic background

Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria, is the most populous city in Africa south of the Sahara. It has continued to experience phenomenal growth since the days of Nigeria's oil boom. Its population increased at the rate of 6.7 per cent per annum between 1970 and 1990 when it attained a total of 7.7 million. It is estimated to grow at the rate of 5 per cent per annum up to 2010, when it is expected to be the world's fifth most populous urban agglomeration.

Its large population and the high rate of population growth are attributable to the continuous migration to the metropolis. The migrants come not only from all parts of Nigeria,

but also from the entire West African subregion. The spatial ethnography of Lagos has thus continued to change significantly over the years. In the pre-independence years, various parts of the metropolis were identifiable with particular ethnic or sub-ethnic groups.

The 1953 census revealed that the Yoruba were the dominant ethnic group in Lagos. They were very prominent in Lagos Island and Ebute Metta to the north of the Island; they were also prominent at Obalende, south of Lagos Island. Next in population size to the Yoruba were the Igbo, a very large ethnic group from the southeastern part of Nigeria. In metropolitan distribution, they were significant at Ikeja where they constituted 33 per cent of the population compared with 30 per cent by the Yoruba. At Apapa, an adjacent metropolitan neighbourhood to the west of Lagos Island, the Igbo were also fairly numerous. Here, they were a quarter of the population compared with the Yoruba's 50 per cent. The Hausa and their kin groups from the northern part of Nigeria had a noticeable representation also at Apapa. Thus, in 1953, the ethnic map of Lagos showed that as one moves east to west from Lagos Island to the mainland, the population of the non-Yoruba elements increases.

This ethnic distribution pattern started to change from 1960 when in order to make Lagos reflect the wider ethnographic diversity of the nation, migrants were encouraged from all parts of the country. The trend continued till about the period of the civil war when nearly all the Igbo population moved back to the east.

The end of the civil war coincided with the beginning of the oil boom. The federal government embarked on its programs of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation, encouraging the mass return of the Igbo to Lagos. Within the next two decades, their population spread within the metropolis exceeding that of the pre-war years. At the present moment, many parts of the metropolis have continued to experience ethnic dilution. Those areas which were predominantly Yoruba have become infiltrated primarily by the Igbo as well as other southern minority groups such as Isoko, Urhobo and Edo. Furthermore, the Hausa-Fulani as well as other minority subgroups from the north like the Kanuri and other middle-belt groups have steadily increased over the years on both Victoria and Ikoyi Islands. Lagos is a melting-pot of migrants from all over the country with the Yoruba being the largest group.

This ethnographic situation, in conjunction with other functional peculiarities of the metropolis, has further transformed some socio-demographic characteristics of the population of Lagos in recent years, making it unlike other cities in Nigeria. These peculiarities include a unique concentration of educational institutions and colleges. There are two universities, two polytechnics, three colleges of education and numerous other post-secondary and postgraduate institutions such as the Lagos Business School which award degrees, diplomas and certificates. Several tertiary institutions located outside Lagos have opened campuses in Lagos. Enugu State University and Ogun State University have each a campus in Lagos which awards degrees and diplomas. The subscriptions for these programs are generally very high, cutting across many socio-economic divides, providing opportunities for correspondence and open studies for diverse applicants from widely differing socio-economic backgrounds, as well as being accompanied by some social effects.

Among the Igbo families for example, it is becoming fashionable for the husbands to sponsor their wives through one of these institutions to obtain a degree, a diploma or a certificate. Such husbands, who are in business or commerce, often have less than a full secondary education. The wives are thus exposed to a wide range of social relations and interactions. Apart from this group, there are others from the ranks of unemployed school leavers who are recent migrants, and still others born in the city, who to enhance their prospects for employment continue to acquire more educational training. A similarly high demand for higher qualification exists among those who are already in employment, urged on

by the desire for upward mobility.

The common factor which seems to underlie the urge for higher qualification is the fact that Lagos has been perceived by the rural dwellers as having the capacity to employ as many as can find their way into the city. This is in line with the traditional role of Lagos as Nigeria's foremost employment-generating city. In the mid-1970s for example, it accounted for over 70 per cent of Nigeria's total industrial employment. Although in recent times such prospects have dwindled, this has not discouraged new migrants from coming from near and far.

The resultant social networking is the type that cuts across numerous divides and may have influenced traditionally-held norms and values on sexual relationships. This situation underscores the need to assess comprehensively the phenomenon of sexual networking, especially at the time when the populace was just becoming aware of the danger of AIDS. This would help in evaluating the performance of subsequent interventionist programs to influence high-risk sexual behaviour.

Methodology

Organization of the survey

The general planning and the execution of the field survey was carried out by the principal researcher with the assistance of two field supervisors. The work of the supervisors included checking that the sampling design for the field survey work was strictly adhered to. They were also to verify the genuineness of a completed questionnaire by selecting samples of completed questionnaires and carrying out routine visits to respondents. Hence, the field canvassers were told to inform their respondents beforehand of the likelihood of such follow-up visits to avoid embarrassment.

The fieldwork was carried out by eight field assistants selected from a larger group who responded to the initial advertisement. They consisted of both undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom had previous fieldwork experience. They were, however, given further training to cope with problems of data canvassing in the area of sexual networking.

After a week of initial training, the field assistants undertook a session of pre-test surveys to assess further their individual capability and other challenges that might help in improving the main survey. As well, the adequacy of the instrument was tested. The main fieldwork invariably benefited from the feedback from the pre-test survey.

The coding frame was prepared by the principal researcher, while the coding of the questionnaires and the transferring of the codes into the coding sheets were carried out by a set of assistants trained for the exercise. Data entry was done at the computer centre of the University of Lagos, while the data cleaning, processing and analysis were done at the Australian National University by the co-researcher, with the assistance of a graduate student formerly of the NCDS, whose invaluable assistance especially in the task of data cleaning and processing is here acknowledged.²

Sampling procedure

The data for this study were collected in 1990. The study forms part of the pioneering efforts

² The principal researcher, the co-researcher and the graduate student are Prof. O. Adegbola, Mr O. Babatola and Mr Jacob Oni.

to investigate sexual behaviour along the present paradigm, which employed an obtrusive instrument for data acquisition.

In view of the financial and time constraints, it was decided from the onset that a minimum sample of 450 respondents would be required, although 500 respondents were canvassed. At the completion of the fieldwork, 458 respondents had been successfully interviewed. The number of respondents to be interviewed having been determined, their allocation among the districts was carried out on the criterion of relative estimated population size.

The first operational step was to obtain a large-scale map of metropolitan Lagos over which were superimposed series of uniform grids. The essential thing was to capture a representative sample which would show the sexual pattern across the metropolis. With the aid of the table of random numbers the cells from which sampling took place were selected. The streets in each of the chosen cells were listed alphabetically and numbered serially, and with the aid of the table of random numbers a percentage of the streets was selected from which the respondents were to be selected.

The next item was the numbering of the residential buildings, followed by a sampling process, still relying on the use of the table of random numbers to select the houses from which respondents were to come. The number of respondents from each street was determined by the relative number of its dwellings against the aggregate of respondents to be interviewed for the study.

The first house from which interviewing started was randomly selected and from that point other houses were selected at regular intervals. The respondents were thereafter selected through a random process from the list of residents drawn up for each house. Interviewers were instructed to persuade the randomly selected respondents to participate, and only to interview another person if the initial person definitely declined. The interviewers succeeded in persuading nearly all the selected respondents to participate in the interview.

Fieldwork problems

The problems of enlisting respondents' interest in a session focusing on their sexual behaviour were envisaged before the exercise began. As expected, the issue of sexuality was considered a private and confidential matter that might not be disclosed to a stranger whose real motive could not accurately be understood. Indeed for some people, it was an area they did not like to discuss as it opened up some affairs they considered buried with their past.

Secondly, it was a new area of research, and apparently researchers have not bothered them in the past on such issues; hence it was difficult persuading them to entrust such sensitive information to another party. The solution was to emphasize the context within which the survey was being carried out.

The interviewers were trained to emphasize the relevance to AIDS of the survey as well as its implications for reproductive health. However, as is observed in the section on AIDS awareness, the general level of AIDS-awareness among the population had just attained 84.7 per cent in the study year. Two years before this time, it was only 57.6 per cent and in 1989 it rose to 73.8 per cent. This raises a question on the degree to which the people have been made aware of the problem of AIDS and the need for their co-operation in a survey on sexual behaviour and practice.

Combined with this issue is the problem of time constraint for most Lagosians. Most of them leave their homes early, between 6 and 7 a.m., and often do not return till 9 p.m. or much later because of the precarious traffic situation in the city. The weekends are therefore spent by some in relaxation. Some people attend social engagements while others engage in some form of economic activity to supplement personal or family budgets. Hence, a low level

of response may be expected. However, 458 respondents were successfully interviewed, giving a response rate of 92 per cent.

Strategy for data analysis

The information sought covered a wide area of respondents' essential socio-economic and demographic characteristics as well as family structure, and reproductive and sexual behaviour. It also covered their perception and knowledge of AIDS. For the respondents who had been married at some time, data collected on their first spouses were fairly similar to those obtained on the respondents themselves, but less inclusive. Some respondents apparently declined to provide information on their spouses.

Since the perception is multidimensional, the data analysis was designed to highlight these dimensions. The first part analyses the sexual activities of the unmarried group against their socio-demographic characteristics. The second part focuses on the incidence of extramarital sex based on whether the respondent had ever had an extramarital sexual relationship and not so much on the recency of such experience.

Some new variables were generated from the initial data set as supplements to it. Such variables relate more to the married than the unmarried respondents. These variables include the age difference between respondent and spouse, intimacy between respondent and spouse, and the time duration from puberty to courtship or to marriage.

The economic factor was considered and operationalized as the budget status of respondents as well as the number of dependants. As designed, the budget status represents the net between regular and supplementary incomes on the one hand and the regular monthly expenditures on the other, since the normal income may not truly reflect the total expendable resources. The number of children and other dependants was also considered as a variable that could influence a respondent's decision whether or not to engage in extramarital sex, in a society perceived to be enmeshed in conflicting moral persuasions on sexuality, economic insolvency, changing social norms and ethnographic diversities.

In many of the comparative analyses, with respect to either the general population characteristics, or the sexual behaviour of the population subgroups, the mean or the median values of the larger population were relied upon. They were also used to generate categories for the relevant variables employed in the analyses. Where possible, the number of categories for the affected variables was kept to a minimum, to enhance the reliability of obtained results. Many variables such as educational qualifications were reclassified in subsequent sections to minimize the incidence of empty cells in the process of statistical analysis.

The phenomenon of extramarital relationship was analysed using logistic regression analysis. The aim was to identify the variables which appear to model its occurrence most reliably in the data.

The study population

Basic demographic characteristics

The general pattern of the surveyed population is outlined in Table 1. There are more males than females, a phenomenon which reflects perhaps a higher degree of migration among males to urban centres; this accords with the migratory pattern of most cities in less developed countries.

The age structure shows that about 80 per cent of the male respondents are below 45 years, while relatively few are above 54 years of age. The modal group is aged 25-34 years. The women are younger on the average, with over 90 per cent below 45 years. About 8 per cent of them are above this age threshold.

There are few differences, however, between the two sexes with respect to their marital status. As expected of an urban centre characterized by higher marital demands on the men, there are slightly more never-married men than never-married women. The widowed, divorced and separated groups represent about 10 per cent of the male population and a little under 13 per cent of females.

Socio-economic characteristics

The distribution patterns of both sexes by educational status appear fairly similar, except for pre-tertiary vocational and professional education and polytechnic-university education among which there are significant differences. The percentages of women who received primary, post-primary and pre-tertiary education are higher than those of men.

The men, on the other hand, include a large percentage of polytechnic and university graduates. The somewhat high ratio of university-educated respondents in the analysis is an indication of the cosmopolitan nature of Lagos. Lagos stands out as the centre with the largest concentration of Nigeria's enlightened class. It is also unique in the enormous concentration of socio-economic and educational opportunities.

The respondents' occupational structure seems to reflect their education. The main employment group for both sexes is the white-collar vocation. These are essentially university and polytechnic graduates who have secured employment in the numerous industries and commercial establishments as well as in the public sector in the metropolis.

The observed pattern of employment, especially as it relates to the large size of the white-collar group on the one hand, and the relatively small size of the unemployed group on the other, can be appreciated only in the context of the economic circumstances at the time of the fieldwork. Many of the white-collar employees were at this time employed in the numerous financial institutions which mushroomed between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. They attracted many people with large incomes, leading to the growth of the service sector, such as the computer industry, which served them. However, this tempo was sustained for barely three years before the banking sector or the economy collapsed, throwing many employees into unemployment.

The income pattern also can be better appreciated against the economic situation described above. It is a reflection of the unevenness of the wage structure, which has a mean of about 194 naira and a maximum of about 11,300 naira per month. The situation is made worse by the actions of those in the business sector, who were relatively immune from the economic crisis, as it was possible for them to adjust their selling prices to reflect the inflation rate.

The budget status in Table 1 is the net expenditure from all incomes on a monthly basis. Net income rather than gross income is a better index for assessing the possible influence of the economic burden on sexual behaviour.

The inclusion of the number of dependants is to explore further the economic burden on the population. Table 1 shows that most families have at least three children to provide for, and about a third have no dependants. For consistency, the respondents are classified by sex even though in most families, the burden of children is jointly borne by the husband and the wife, except in the event of widowhood, divorce, separation or paternal irresponsibility. Table 1 shows that a little above a third (35.8% males and 35.4% females) of the population has no dependants, while the proportions with one to three children are 26 per cent males and 31.6 per cent females. Those with a minimum of four children are more among males (38.2%) than females (33.6%).

Table 1
Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the study population

| Major characteristics | Response level (%) | Males | | Females | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | | (N=246) | % | (N=212) | % |
| Age | 99.8 | | | | |
| 15 - 24 | | 32 | 13.0 | 57 | 27.0 |
| 25 - 34 | | 108 | 43.9 | 95 | 45.0 |
| 35 -44 | | 57 | 23.2 | 38 | 18.6 |
| 45 - 54 | | 34 | 13.8 | 13 | 5.3 |
| 55 + | | 15 | 6.1 | 6 | 3.2 |
| Marital Status | 99.3 | | | | |
| Never married | | 104 | 42.3 | 85 | 40.5 |
| Currently married | | 118 | 47.9 | 98 | 46.2 |
| Widowed | | 8 | 3.2 | 15 | 7.1 |
| Divorced-separated | | 16 | 6.5 | 14 | 6.6 |
| Education | 100.0 | | | | |
| None-Koranic/ Some primary | | 28 | 11.4 | 22 | 10.4 |
| Primary completed | | 24 | 9.7 | 24 | 11.3 |
| Post-primary | | 66 | 26.8 | 69 | 32.5 |
| Pre-tertiary voc/prof | | 18 | 7.3 | 32 | 15.1 |
| University/polytechnic | | 110 | 44.7 | 65 | 30.7 |
| Occupation | 100.0 | | | | |
| None | | 12 | 4.8 | 17 | 8.0 |
| White collar | | 104 | 42.3 | 79 | 37.2 |
| Blue collar | | 65 | 26.4 | 43 | 20.3 |
| Business-commerce | | 33 | 13.4 | 25 | 11.8 |
| NYSC/Schooling | | 17 | 6.9 | 17 | 8.0 |
| Other | | 15 | 6.1 | 31 | 14.6 |
| Ethnic Origin | 99.1 | | | | |
| Igbo | | 80 | 32.5 | 49 | 23.1 |
| Yoruba | | 102 | 41.5 | 109 | 51.4 |
| Southern minorities | | 43 | 17.5 | 36 | 17.0 |
| Other | | 21 | 8.5 | 17 | 8.0 |

Table 1 (cont.)
Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the study population

| Major characteristics | Response level (%) | Males | | Females | |
|--|--------------------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | | (N=246) | % | (N=212) | % |
| Religion | 100.0 | | | | |
| Catholic | | 88 | 35.7 | 64 | 30.2 |
| Protestant | | 93 | 37.8 | 96 | 45.3 |
| Muslim | | 45 | 18.3 | 46 | 21.7 |
| Traditional/Other | | 20 | 8.1 | 6 | 2.8 |
| Budget | 100.0 | | | | |
| Above the median (US\$5) | | 78 | 31.7 | 67 | 31.6 |
| Below the median | | 168 | 68.3 | 145 | 68.4 |
| Dependants (including children) | 100.0 | | | | |
| 0 | | 88 | 35.8 | 75 | 35.4 |
| 1 - 3 | | 64 | 26.0 | 67 | 31.6 |
| 4 + | | 94 | 38.2 | 70 | 33.0 |
| Childhood Environment | 100.0 | | | | |
| Village | | 67 | 27.2 | 38 | 17.9 |
| Town | | 139 | 56.5 | 123 | 58.0 |
| Lagos | | 40 | 16.3 | 51 | 24.1 |
| Duration in Lagos | 98.5 | | | | |
| Less than 10 years | | 122 | 50.0 | 108 | 50.9 |
| 10 - 19 years | | 69 | 28.3 | 49 | 23.2 |
| 20 - 29 years | | 37 | 15.2 | 34 | 16.0 |
| 30 years and above | | 21 | 6.5 | 21 | 9.9 |

Classified by childhood environment, more males than females seem to have had an early childhood village life. About 10 per cent more males than females had a rural early childhood. Most of the females on the other hand, were either town-born or Lagos-born. Even then, those who had a township childhood environment constitute the modal group for both sexes, exceeding 55 per cent in each case.

The relationship between childhood environment and the duration of stay in Lagos is rather complementary. The mean duration for the entire population is 12.2 years. At least 50 per cent of both male and female groups have stayed for less than the mean duration. The percentage of those who have stayed at least 20 years in Lagos is higher among females (26%) than males (21%).

Ethnicity

The ethnic composition, as expected, showed a high representation of the Yoruba people: Lagos, although clearly the Nigerian melting pot, still remains primarily a Yoruba city. The Igbo constitute the second largest ethnic group. Their comparatively large representation is connected with their dominant occupation, which is commerce.

The proportion of the Igbo males exceeds that of the females. This is understandable as their single men have to move first into the city to prepare for their spouses to join them. The

southern minorities are strongly represented in Lagos, accounting for 17 per cent of the sample. The proportion of men is slightly higher than that of the women, resembling, in a small way, the Igbo male-female pattern. The observed proportion of the combined northern groups may not accurately reflect their real percentage in the city. Their religious inclinations may perhaps explain such variation. These are predominantly Muslims, with stronger Islamic persuasion in certain respects than their southern Muslim counterparts. Their relatively high conservatism coupled with a low affinity with Western education meant that they were not very co-operative when discussing issues related to sex. It also explains the very low level of access to the women.

The religious composition seems to reflect much of the ethnic pattern, and perhaps does so more than any other variable. Christians are in the majority with the Protestants being the larger denomination. They constitute 45.3 per cent of the female respondents and 37.8 per cent of males. The Catholics are also strong, especially as a majority of the Igbo group are Catholics.

The proportion of Muslims in the sample may be somewhat unrepresentative because of the conservative attitudes identified with the northern Muslim group. It is, however, expected that the differences will not affect the outcomes of the present study.

Knowledge of AIDS

In a baseline study, it was important that knowledge of the AIDS epidemic amongst the population should be ascertained, as this knowledge should, *ceteris paribus*, influence sexual behaviour. Questions posed include whether the respondents have heard of AIDS, the sources, the first year they heard of it, and what they have heard about the agency of its spread, as well as its curability. In addition, they were asked about their own impression of the AIDS epidemic. The emergent pattern reveals some symmetry in the responses of the male and the female members, except for some minor differences as illustrated in Table 2.

About 89 per cent of males claimed to have heard of AIDS, as had 87 per cent of females. However, the rate of awareness was lower before 1985, as the 13-year cumulative percentage of awareness, between 1970 and 1983, was 6.3 per cent for men and 2.2 per cent for women. This level compares poorly with a single year awareness level of 20.3 per cent for men and 21.2 per cent for women in 1988. The data show a sharp rise in the trend of awareness from 1985, when the awareness rates attained a two-digit level for both sexes, indicating that deliberate anti-AIDS information programs were becoming more relevant from this time.

The greatest percentages of both sexes identified the primary source of their information as radio and television, followed by the newspapers, while friends and relatives occupy the third position in information dissemination. It is notable here that the proportion of women who identified friend or relation as their primary source is higher than that of men.

The analysis of the responses to AIDS transmission shows that for both sexes, near-accurate knowledge was consistently above 70 per cent. The two major relevant channels of spread identified were sexual interaction and blood transfusion. Both of these channels accounted for 78 per cent of the male respondents and 79.7 per cent of the females.

The responses to two other questions on AIDS reveal a seemingly paradoxical element in the general perception of AIDS, at least in the year of the study. Respondents were asked what they had heard of AIDS with respect to its curability, as well as the method they considered could cure the disease. The pattern of responses to the first question shows that the majority of both sexes, 67.1 per cent male and 71.2 per cent female, had heard that the disease is incurable, while 20 per cent of both sexes were silent on this issue. The percentages of those who claimed to have heard of spiritual and orthodox cures were 3.7 and 8.1 per cent for males and 1.4 and 5.2 per cent for females. The respondents' views on persons they thought could

cure AIDS seemed somewhat contrary to their earlier response pattern. The percentage of those who indicated AIDS as being incurable dropped significantly with respondents' subjective opinions on the curability of AIDS. About 1 per cent of males and 15 per cent of females did not respond to the question on curability of AIDS.

Table 2
Responses to question on AIDS (% distribution)

| Questions | Responses | Males | % | Females | % |
|--|----------------------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Ever heard of AIDS? | Yes | 219 | 89.8 | 185 | 87.7 |
| | No | 25 | 10.2 | 26 | 12.3 |
| | No resp. | 2 | 0.8 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Sources of information | Radio/TV | 148 | 60.2 | 111 | 60.0 |
| | Newspapers | 34 | 13.8 | 26 | 12.3 |
| | Friend/Rel. | 14 | 6.4 | 24 | 11.3 |
| | Health workers/Hosp. | 10 | 4.1 | 13 | 6.1 |
| | Govt. Publ. | 10 | 4.1 | 9 | 4.2 |
| When AIDS was first heard of | 1970-1983 | 9 | 6.3 | 4 | 2.2 |
| | 1984 | 4 | 2.0 | 5 | 2.7 |
| | 1986 | 26 | 10.6 | 27 | 12.7 |
| | 1988 | 50 | 20.3 | 45 | 21.2 |
| | 1990 | 24 | 9.8 | 26 | 12.3 |
| What have you heard of AIDS (about how it can be cured)? | Incurable | 165 | 67.1 | 151 | 71.2 |
| | Medical healing | 20 | 8.1 | 11 | 5.2 |
| | Spiritual healing | 9 | 3.7 | 3 | 1.4 |
| | Unspecific | 49 | 19.9 | 43 | 20.3 |
| Who do you think can cure AIDS? | Nobody | 110 | 44.7 | 95 | 44.8 |
| | God/Prayer/Spiritual | 45 | 18.3 | 33 | 15.6 |
| | Doctor | 41 | 16.7 | 38 | 22.4 |
| | Traditional healer | 8 | 3.3 | 4 | 1.9 |

The deviation follows the same pattern for both sexes, apart from the fact that more of the females than males have confidence in the orthodox medical solution. The proportion of men who believed in a spiritual solution was 1.6 per cent higher than those who favoured orthodox medicine, although the percentages for both options are quite high. Generally, more men seem to have confidence in the traditional option, with about 3.3 per cent indicating so, as opposed to 1.9 per cent of the female respondents. The next section analyses premarital sexual activities among the unmarried population.

Patterns of premarital sexual activities

Premarital sex is analysed in three subsections. The first describes the socio-economic traits of the unmarried population and the second compares some statistical parameters of selected sexual variables between males and females, as well as the focus of their sexual practice. The third subsection examines the pattern of variations in sexual variables using selected socio-economic characteristics.

The variables examined include the age at first sexual intercourse, total sexual partners, sexual partners within the last year of study; and sexual partners within the last month

(MSEXP³) as well as the frequency of sexual intercourse with the last four partners within the last year (NSPAR1 to NSPAR4).

Selected socio-economic traits of the unmarried groups

Altogether 104 males and 85 females had never been married in the population; they constituted 42.3 per cent of males and 40.1 per cent of females. The average age of the males is 27.9 years against 24.5 years for females. Both sexes have the same modal age of 25 and minimum of 15 years.

Distribution by education shows that both the males and females have a low representation in the uneducated group, each having less than 2 per cent. However, the proportion of females with low education is still marginally higher than that of males. The high education group represents the modal percentage of males (53.3%) in contrast to the median education group among the females (38.5%).

Ethnic characteristics show an Igbo modal percentage of males (37.1%) compared to a female Yoruba modal group (49.4%). For both sexes, the 'Others', consisting of the northern groups, are the least numerous. The religious characteristics show Protestants as the modal group for both sexes, followed by Catholics. The proportion of Muslims among the females is, however, substantial (22.5%), exceeding the Muslim males by over 10 per cent, while the proportion of those of traditional religion is larger among males than females by about 7 per cent.

The occupational structure shows that the patterns of both sexes are rather similar, except that the absolute percentages differ in some respects. For example, the two most prominent occupational groups are the white-collar (40% male and 24.7% female) and the blue-collar (21.9% male and 24.7% female). These are followed by those still in school or involved in the National Service. For males, they constitute 16.2 per cent as against 20 per cent females. Those who are in business and commerce are 6.7 per cent of males and 5.9 per cent of females.

Sexuality variables

As illustrated in Table 3, at least 98.4 per cent of men and 91.7 per cent of females have had sexual intercourse at some time in their lives. Analysis of total sexual partners shows that 73.9 per cent of males and 94.8 per cent of females who said they had had sexual intercourse responded to this question. It appears from the greater percentage of females responding to questions on sexual intercourse that females tend to be more record-conscious of their sexual dealings than men.

Analysis of the age of first sexual experience variable shows that on the average, males have their first sexual intercourse at about the age of 16, about one year younger than the females. Indeed, the females' modal age of 18 years at first sexual intercourse is three years older than the average for males. The earlier age of entry into sexual activity by males seems to reflect the disparity between them and the females in their total number of sexual partners. While the average total sexual partners for males is nine, it is only slightly above three partners for females.

³ The MSEXP variable was not considered in the second part as changes in sexual practice within the last month may not as truly reflect the accustomed sexual behaviour of individuals as age of first sexual experience, total sexual partners and sexual partners in last year variables which focus on relatively long periods of time.

Table 3
Patterns of premarital sexual variables

| Sex Parameter | ASIXP ^a | | TSEXP ^b | | ASEXP ^c | | MSEXP | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|-------|-----|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Statis. Parameter | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 16.4 | 17.5 | 9 | 3.3 | 2.6 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.1 |
| Median | 17 | 17 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Mode | 15 | 18 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| No. of respondents (valid) | 103 | 77 | 83 | 73 | 88 | 68 | 86 | 68 |
| As % of unmarried population | 98 | 91.7 | 73.9 | 94.8 | 85.4 | 88.3 | 97.7 | 101 |

a - age of first sexual experience. b - total sexual partners. c - sexual partners in last year.

A more accurate assessment of the total sexual partners variable between the sexes is reflected by their median and modal values. For males, they are four and two sexual partners respectively as against two and one partners for the females. They both reveal that, on the average, the total number of partners is larger for males, and that the extremely wide gap between their mean values may be due to the incidence of larger extreme values among the male respondents.

The patterns of sexual partnership within the last year show some convergence between the two sex groups. For example, the males' average of 2.6 sexual partners in the last year was not as much as double the mean partnership size (1.7) for the females, as observed in the previous sexual variables; nevertheless, a comparison of their median values still shows that the most characteristic male had had about two sexual partners compared to one by his female counterpart in the last year. In spite of this difference, both sexes shared a modal sexual partnership size of one within the last year.

The analysis of the MSEXP variable shows that the male's average number of sexual partners is close to two while that of the female is about one partner. Similarly, both males and females recorded one sexual partner as the modal and the median values within the last month.

Focus in sexual partnership

Table 4 depicts the incidence of focus in sexual intercourse with the last four sexual partners. The table shows a decline in the size of sexually active population from the first partner to the fourth partner. About nine per cent of males who had had sexual intercourse within the last year gave the frequency of their sexual intercourse with their first partner while all of the relevant females responded.

About 38 per cent of the males who had a first sexual partner added a second partner against 35 per cent of the females. A greater drop characterized the female population at the third sexual partnership level where only 11.8 per cent of those who went on to the second sexual partnership level went ahead to have a third partner, against 26.7 per cent of the males. At the fourth partnership level, 12.8 per cent and 7.3 per cent respectively of males and females who reached the third sexual partnership level added yet a fourth partner. Apparently, more females than males dropped out at each successive level.

Table 4
Focus in premarital sexual intercourse

| Partner Level | NSPAR1 | | NSPAR2 | | NSPAR3 | | NSPAR4 | |
|-------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|-----|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Mean | 40.9 | 51.5 | 17.1 | 38.8 | 33 | 59.6 | 60 | 56 |
| Median | 15 | 54 | 6 | 12.5 | 14 | 88 | 88 | 89 |
| Mode | 97 | 97 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 88 | 89 | 88 |
| Valid No. | 86 | 68 | 33 | 24 | 23 | 8 | 11 | 5 |
| As % of sexually active | 97.7 | 100 | 38.4 | 35.3 | 26.7 | 11.8 | 12.8 | 7.3 |

The pattern of focus in sexual activity contrasts largely with the pattern observed in the incidence of multi-partnership sex for which males had the greater tendency. In almost all the partnership levels, females consistently had a more pronounced element of focus than males. Hence, the average frequency of sexual intercourse by the female respondents at the first sexual partnership level exceeded that of the average male by about 26 per cent.

At the second partnership level, the mean sexual intercourse of 39 times by the females more than doubled that of the males. The same pattern is observable at the third sexual partnership level, where, on the average, a female had about 60 episodes of sexual intercourse with her partner against 33 of intercourse by the males. Sexual intercourse with the fourth partners shows a marginal difference between the two sexes. Though only 7.3 per cent of females had a fourth partner against 12.8 per cent of males, they were both marked by a relatively high level of sexual focus. Thus, the general pattern across the four partnership levels gives an indication of a core minority, both among the male and the female groups, who are characterized by a high degree of sexual focus, as well as multi-partner sexual activity. However, a greater degree of focus is more characteristic of the females than the males. The next section examines variations in premarital sex by selected socio-economic variables.

Socio-economic correlates of sexual activity

Age at first sexual intercourse

Variations in the age at first sexual intercourse by education, budget, status, religion, ethnicity and childhood environment among the unmarried population were analysed. The three sexual variables⁴ examined were classified into either three or four categories, corresponding to the 'low', the 'normal/average' and the 'high' groups. These classes were devised using the mean values of the variables for the larger sampled population, to which the premarital group relate.⁵ The budget status categories employed in the analysis were based, however, on the income distribution of the premarital population and have three categories, namely the negative balance, the moderate balance and the large surplus budget

⁴ Not every sexual variable was cross-analysed with all the selected socio-economic parameters. Selections were based on the relevance of a socio-economic parameter in influencing a particular sexual variable.

⁵ The benefit of such a scheme is that though the analysis focuses on the never-married population, an insight into the patterns of these variables for the entire population can be gained by examining the resultant inter-category variations that such mean values generated among the never-married.

groups.

The analysis of age of first sexual experience by educational status showed that irrespective of sex, the respondents with the sub-medial age of entry constitute the modal percentage. It varied from 50 per cent among the high-education female group to 81.3 per cent of the moderate-education male group. The proportions of those who had first sexual intercourse within the super-medial age group were relatively low, except for the higher-education male group, among whom the percentage was marginally higher. Hence, while 12.5 per cent of low-education males had a 'later' first-time sexual experience, 13.3 and 23.6 per cent respectively of the moderate and high-education groups were so affected. The pattern among the females differed to some extent. The modal percentage of 'later entrants' for example, is associated with the female moderate-education group as opposed to the high-education group of the males.

Analysis of age of first sexual experience by professed religion showed that Catholic males, followed by Muslim males, had the largest percentages of early entrants into sexual activity, being 72.2 and 70 per cent of their respective populations. The Protestant males had the lowest percentage (48.9%) of the early entrants. By contrast, 11.1 per cent of Catholic males had delayed entry into sexuality against 25 per cent of the 'Other faiths', 24.4 per cent of Protestants and 20 per cent of Muslims.

Among the females, some contrasting patterns were observed. For example, all those in the 'Other faith' group had early sexual experience. They were followed by the Catholics of whom 70 per cent began sexual activity before the mean age of 17. On the other hand, the Protestant females had the largest proportion (21.6%) of late entrants, followed by the Catholics (20.0%) and then the Muslims (17.6%).

The ethnographic analysis of the age of first sexual experience variable shows some similarities and contrasts between the two sexes. The Southern Minority male and female groups had the largest proportion of early entrants into sexual activity, while the 'Other' ethnic group had the lowest percentages of early entrants. Furthermore, the Yoruba males and the Igbo females had the largest percentages of those with delayed sexual experience, while the Southern Minority male and female groups, which had the modal percentage of early entrants, also had the lowest percentages of those with delayed first sexual experience.

The influence of the environment was more differentiating among the males, as 66.7 per cent of those with Lagos childhood experience came early into sexual activity against 65.1 per cent town-born and 48 per cent village-born. Furthermore, only 6.7 per cent Lagos-born attained a minimum of 20 years before the first sexual experience in contrast to 25.4 per cent of the town-born and 12 per cent of the village-born. Among the females, childhood environment tends to be more differentiating among those who delayed their first-sexual experience than among the early entrants. Thus, while 36.4 per cent village-born waited for more than the mean age, only 18.2 per cent Lagos-born waited till the age of 20 before their first sexual intercourse.

Total sexual partnership

Total sexual partnership was cross-analysed with education, budget status, religion, ethnicity and childhood environment. The relationship between the educational variable and the total sexual partners variable is similar to that between education and the age of entry into active sexual life, particularly with the males. Hence, among them, those with low education have the largest percentage (71.4%) in the low total sexual partners category. They were followed by the moderate-education group (68%) while the high-education group has the lowest (39%). By contrast, the percentage of the high-education group with many sexual partners (34.1%) more than doubled the corresponding percentages for both the low-education group

(14.3%) and the moderate-education group (12%).

The pattern observable with the females compares and contrasts with the males in different respects. On the one hand, the general tendency for the percentage of those with medial intra-medial partners to decline as educational status rises is repeated among the females. Hence, the percentage of those with low total sexual partners reduces from 84.2 for the low educational group to 83.9 and 72.7 per cent respectively for the moderate and the high educational groups. On the other hand, the tendency for 'large total sexual partnership' to vary positively with educational status of males is absent among the females; rather, both the high and the moderate female educational groups were equally distributed between the low and the normal total sexual partners categories. Only the low-education group have some respondents (15.8%) in the large total sexual partners category.

A cross-analysis of the budget status and the total sexual partners for males does not suggest that the availability of excess funds encourages the incidence of large 'total' sexual partners among the premarital population. For example, 50 per cent of the negative-budget males have had less than the average number of sexual partners, while 27.5 per cent of them have had more than the mean total sexual partners. Ironically, 52.4 per cent of those with surplus budgets are found in the low category, against 14.3 per cent in the large-high partnership category.

Among the female groups, both the moderate and the large-surplus budget groups are not significantly differentiated in the pattern of their distribution among the total sexual partners categories. The former group comprises 93.8 and 6.3 per cent respectively of respondents in the low and average (normal) total sexual partners categories, while the corresponding values for the surplus-budget group are 92.9 and 7.1 per cent respectively. By contrast, 7.0 per cent of the 'negative-budget' females are found in the 'large category' of total sexual partners, against none of their stronger budget counterparts.

Analysis of total sexual partners by religious affiliation of males shows that the 'Other' religious group with 30 per cent, followed by the Protestants (28.9%), led in the large- total sexual partners category. The Muslims had the lowest percentage of modes (12.5%) in this category. Among the females only the Catholics (11.8%) and the Protestants (2.6%) had respondents in the super-medial categories. The Muslim females, like their male counterparts, had a moderate number of total sexual partners. A similar trait is also exhibited by the 'Other' religious group, among whom no respondent had ever had more than four sexual partners. The ethnic factor does not seem to differentiate the total sexual partners among males. The respective percentages of the ethnic groups in the super-medial category are not very wide apart, varying from 26.7 per cent of Yoruba to 23.5 of the Southern Minorities. Only the Other ethnic group with 16.7 per cent in the 'large' category is appreciably lower than the other ethnic groups. A similar pattern is observable with the females, of whom less than 10 per cent each of the Igbo and Yoruba had ever had many partners. The Southern Minorities did not feature in the large category while the 'Others' have the largest percentage (16.7%) of respondents with more than ten sexual partners.

The relationship between childhood environment and total sexual partners for males contrasts with the pattern observed with age of first sexual experience. For example, the Lagos-born had the lowest percentage (8.3%) of 'large' sexual partnership, while those with township childhood environment had the highest. Those with village childhood fall in between. The general pattern is that more of the Lagos-born as well as the village-born males have had less than average sexual partnership. Among the female population, the Lagos-born with 9.5 per cent in the large total sexual partners cohort are followed by the town-born (2.4%). The village-born are exclusively confined to the sub-medial partnership cohort, showing that relative urbanism in childhood environment tends to relate positively with

experiencing numerous sexual partnerships but only among females.

Last-annual sexual partnership

Sexual partnership within the last year was divided into three categories. Those with one partner represent the sub-average or the low group, those with two or three partners represent the average or the normal, while those with four or more partners make up the 'large' category. The emergent pattern among males' educational groups tends to differentiate the 'high' education males with 20.8 per cent of many sexual partners in last year from the low-education (with 14.3%) and the medium-education group (12.0%).

Only 25 per cent of the high-education cohort had a sub-average number of sexual partners in comparison with 50 per cent of the low-education and 56 per cent of the medium education groups. By contrast, among the female groups, the tendency for super-medial partnership is strongest among the low-education group, which had 17.6 per cent in the large partnership category against 4.8 per cent by the high-education groups while the moderate-education group was conspicuously unrepresented.

A budget-based analysis of males shows that a greater proportion (20%) of the surplus-budget group had more sexual partners in the last year than both the negative-balance (17.1%) and the minimum-surplus (13.6%) groups. This pattern deviates somewhat from that of the total sexual partnership. Among the females, the incidence of super-medial sexual partnership occurs only with respect to the negative budget groups, of which 9.8 per cent were involved. Both the moderate and the large-surplus groups were distributed only between the low and the average partnership range, except that the latter group had a larger percentage within the low-partnership category.

Analysis by religious grouping shows some contrasts between the males and the females. Among the males, for example, the Muslims had the largest percentage (22.2%) of 'large' sexual partnership as opposed to the Catholics (12.5) for the females. By contrast, no Muslim females had more than the average number of sexual partners, a trait shared with the Traditionalist/Other religions female group. The Protestant males with 16.7 per cent of 'large' sexual partnership come behind the Catholic males. A similar pattern also occurred between their female groups.

The ethnicity analysis shows that the Igbo males (22.9%), followed by the Yoruba (17.2%) and the Southern Minority (11.1%) males had more 'large' sexual partnership in the last year. The 'Other' Ethnic group males were rather evenly distributed between the sub-average and the average categories. Among the female groups, the pattern is reversed. The 'Other' ethnic group topped the 'large' sexual partners in last year category with 16.7 per cent, followed by the Southern Minority (11.1%), the Igbo (5.9%) and then the Yoruba (2.8%).

The childhood environment also contrasts the male and the female patterns to a large extent. For example, while the town-born and the village-born had the modal percentages in the large-partnership category of the male groups, the Lagos-born females (10.5%) topped the female groups. They were followed by the town-born (5%), while the village-born were unrepresented.

Extramarital sexual activity

The perspective from which extramarital relationship was analysed differed from that for marital sex, primarily because of the different context of anomalous sexual behaviour within marriage. Elsewhere, the analysis of extramarital sexual relationship is often based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Isiugo-Abanihe 1994). However, decisions within a marital union may not be influenced primarily by the characteristics of

either of the partners alone. Hence Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) shows that intimacy could be a significant factor in the likelihood of a partner engaging in extramarital activities.⁶ Distances between partners measured by socio-demographic and emotional variables may influence their decision to enter extramarital relationships. We decided to explore this idea of socio-economic and psychological distances between a married couple, to discover how much they are associated with the tendency for extramarital sex.

Consequently, a series of socio-demographic variables was considered, and there are four major reasons that influenced the adoption of each variable. One is our knowledge of the social context of the study area; another is the possibility of measuring the distance between the respondent and the spouse. The educational qualifications of the husband or the wife may not be as important as the educational gap between them. Similarly, the discrete ages of the partners in a union may not be as important as the difference between their ages. It is along these lines that some of the variables in the analysis have been operationalized. This operation was, however, strictly limited by the number of questions asked of respondents' spouses. The third consideration is the need to avoid numerous categories of these variables which may reduce the reliability of the results obtained from the statistical techniques.⁷ Hence, a few factors such as intimacy were analysed without differentiating sexes. There was also a need to keep the number of independent variables at a minimum for greater reliability of result, given the sample size.

Based on the above considerations, ten variables were initially considered, some directly relating each respondent to his or her spouse. Five variables were fused together to generate the degree of closeness between couples. They include whether respondents operate joint bank accounts with spouses, whether they eat together, whether they sleep together in the same bed and in the same room and whether they go out together. Each respondent had a maximum of five points and a minimum of zero. The values were divided into high, medium and low levels of intimacy.

The second variable employed was spousal age difference. Three categories of age differences were generated. The first is the minimum spouse age difference irrespective of the sex of the respondent; the second consists of female respondents much younger than their husbands, while the third group comprises male respondents much older than their wives.

Education status was also considered, measuring the difference between the number of years of formal education of the wife and the husband. Three categories were formed. The first is 'minimum education gap', where the male respondent has less than four years more education than the wife, or where the female respondent has the same educational qualification as her husband. The second category comprises respondents with much more education than their wives while the third category consists of respondents with much more education than their husbands.

Other variables classified according to sex include the duration of stay of respondents in Lagos. In these variables, four groups were identified: men with minimum duration, women with minimum duration, men and women each with long duration of stay. The economic consideration was analysed by the budget status of the respondents and four groups were initially identified: men with low budget status, women with low budget status, men with surplus budget status and women with surplus budget status.

⁶ Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) explored the inter-partnership variable as a function of extramarital sex only as it affects inter-spousal closeness.

⁷ For this reason occupation could not be analysed since there are up to six categories.

Other variables include the dependency factor,⁸ which measures the number of children and dependants cared for by respondents. Three categories of dependency level were identified based partly on the Nigerian National Population Policy of four children per woman. The first category consists of women with no dependants at all, the second are those with up to four dependants, and the third category consists of those with more than four dependants.

Four other variables were also considered and entered at one stage or another into the model. The first is the number of years in marriage, for which there are two groups. Next is the childhood environment of the respondent which has three subcategories: those who had their childhood environment primarily as the village, those with township childhood environment, and those with Lagos as their childhood environment. The remaining two variables are religion and ethnicity. Religion comprises only three religious groups: the Catholics, the Muslims and the Protestants. The ethnic groups were divided into four: the Igbo, Yoruba, the southern minorities and the 'Others'.

Table 5 shows the answers to the questions on extramarital relationships by the variables outlined above. As illustrated in the table, the incidence of extramarital relationship seems to relate inversely with intimacy, as the highest incidence of extramarital relationship occurred among respondents with a low level of intimacy⁹ with their spouses.

The couples' age difference shows that respondents with wide age advantage over their wives have the highest incidence of extramarital relationship with 60 per cent of them having had such relationships. By comparison, 40.6 per cent of those who have minimum age difference between them and their spouses have been involved in extramarital relationships.

The explanation seems to be that men who are much older than their wives are polygamous. Or perhaps such men are in the current relationship after separation from their first wife either through divorce or death. For these men, either polygyny has exposed them to numerous women or the gap between the loss of the initial wife and marriage to the current one has widened their social interactions. The relatively high values of extramarital relationships associated with the 'minimum age-difference' group suggest that either of the two parties, most probably the husbands, are looking for younger partners as the glamour of the initial relationship wanes, or perhaps the female partner is now seeking for elderly men who are well-off and are able to meet economic needs not met by the husband.

The pattern of response for the educational gap factor suggests the possibility of exaggeration by men with inferior education to their wives. This seems very likely as the question about the wife's education preceded that about extramarital relationships. Otherwise, it may be a phenomenon worthy of further investigation.¹⁰ Besides the husbands with low education, more than half of the men with a wide educational gap between them and their wives have had extramarital relationships. Similarly, the percentage of respondents with minimum educational gap between them and their spouses is quite high: such husbands may have some difficulty in exercising their role as the heads of their households. Such circumstances often engender frustration for the couple and increase their likelihood of

⁸ This variable was considered with great caution, and was not really categorized by sex as the financial responsibility incident upon child rearing is often borne by both parents, especially in an urban environment like Lagos. It may be difficult to state categorically if the burden of child responsibility for a woman currently in marriage can compel her to seek extramarital relationships. Regardless of this reservation, it was added at the initial stage of the modelling.

⁹ Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) has identified this in an earlier study using multi-location data on Nigeria.

¹⁰ The general pattern seems to suggest that women underreported this phenomenon.

engaging in extramarital sexual relationships.

The childhood environment shows that those who grew up in Lagos with its exposure to temptation had a larger percentage of extramarital relationships than those who grew up in the village or other towns. Among the religious groups, the 'Other' group have 66.7 per cent committal level, followed by the Muslims with 52.8 per cent. The Catholics, with 37.4 per cent committal level, exceeded the Protestants by 6 per cent.

Table 5
Percentage distribution of those who have ever had extramarital relationship (married respondents only) by selected variables

| | Yes | No | %Yes |
|---|-----|----|------|
| Sex | | | |
| Ever had extramarital relationship | | | |
| Male | 75 | 53 | 58.9 |
| Female | 20 | 90 | 17.4 |
| Intimacy | | | |
| Low intimacy | 30 | 19 | 61.2 |
| Medium intimacy | 30 | 56 | 34.9 |
| High intimacy | 35 | 68 | 34.0 |
| Education gap | | | |
| Spousal minimum education gap | 54 | 63 | 46.2 |
| Husband with higher education | 12 | 11 | 52.2 |
| Wife with higher education | 4 | 22 | 15.4 |
| Wife with lower education | 9 | 43 | 17.3 |
| Husband with lower education | 14 | 4 | 77.8 |
| Spouse age difference | | | |
| Minimum spouse age difference | 56 | 82 | 40.6 |
| Female respondent's age much lower than husband's | 3 | 38 | 7.3 |
| Male respondent's age higher than wife's | 22 | 21 | 60.4 |
| Childhood environment | | | |
| Village | 22 | 40 | 35.5 |
| Town | 53 | 84 | 38.7 |
| Lagos | 20 | 19 | 51.3 |
| Religion | | | |
| Catholic | 34 | 57 | 37.4 |
| Protestant | 27 | 58 | 31.8 |
| Muslim | 28 | 25 | 52.8 |
| Other | 6 | 13 | 31.6 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| Igbo | 28 | 40 | 41.2 |
| Yoruba | 52 | 60 | 46.4 |
| Southern minorities | 9 | 30 | 23.1 |
| Other | 6 | 13 | 31.6 |
| Years in Marriage | | | |
| 0 – 12 | 53 | 90 | 37.1 |
| 12 + | 40 | 48 | 45.5 |

Table 5 (cont.)
Percentage distribution of those who have ever had extramarital relationship (married respondents only) by selected variables

| | Yes | No | % Yes |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|-------|
| Budget status | | | |
| Men with low budget status | 27 | 19 | 48.7 |
| Women with low budget status | 1 | 17 | 5.6 |
| Men with high budget status | 49 | 34 | 59.0 |
| Women with high budget status | 18 | 73 | 19.8 |
| Duration of stay in Lagos | | | |
| Men with short stay | 39 | 24 | 61.9 |
| Women with short stay | 10 | 48 | 17.2 |
| Men with long stay | 37 | 29 | 56.1 |
| Women with long stay | 9 | 42 | 17.6 |

Ethnic comparison associates the Yoruba with the greatest incidence of extramarital sexual activity. The incidence is not particularly low among the Igbo; it is only among the Southern Minorities that the figure is relatively low. This may be explained by a substantial representation of the Edo-Urhobo group, who believe that extramarital sex incurs supernatural consequences.

The number of years married, as expected, shows that the longer the marriage the higher the incidence of extramarital sex among the population. The budget status factor shows that men with a surplus balance and those with a low budget balance are almost opposite in the degree of extramarital sex. Women, particularly those in the low-budget group, generally have a low level.

The last considered variable, the duration of stay in Lagos, shows that men with the shortest duration as well as men with long duration have the largest percentage of extramarital sex, while women with short duration have the smallest percentage.

The multivariate analysis

Application of the logistic model to the analysis helps to identify the most relevant variables which in combination model the incidence of extramarital sex as reflected by the data. It also helps in assessing the relevance of each factor considered in conjunction with all other selected factors in the model. It is therefore a higher-order analysis than the initial dichotomized response patterns analysed above. The size of the initial factors has been too large to model in a statistically efficient manner given the size of the study population.

Different combinations of the conceptualized variables were attempted, with the intention of achieving as much parsimony as possible, given the large number of variables and the relatively moderate population size. Hence, the first step was a preliminary analysis to find out variables that appear correlated; this helped to reduce the size of the initial variables. Secondly, since the logistic regression is sensitive to missing and low-entry scores, which can result in numerous redundancies in the ensuing matrices, some variables that increased the occurrence of redundancies in the calculation were dropped.

As illustrated in Table 6, six variables were examined, using the forward stepwise option of the logistic regression procedure. As the Table illustrates, only three variables – ethnicity,

intimacy and the duration of stay in Lagos – seem to model perfectly the occurrence of extramarital sex as reflected by the data. The table however includes all the six variables entered into the model. The results of the first three variables which did not enter the final model have been included to show their relative importance at the first step of analysis, as well as differences among their categories

The childhood environment factor was the strongest of the three variables that dropped out of the stepwise analysis. At the first step which involved all the six variables, it was significant as a factor at a probability lower than 0.10. It shows that the Lagos-born – the reference category – have a greater likelihood of extramarital sex than those born either in any other town or in a village in Nigeria.

Specifically, the village-born have about a 17 per cent chance, compared to a 100 per cent chance for the Lagos-born, of engaging in extramarital sex, the result being significant at a probability below 5 per cent. Those born in any of the other towns have about a 47 per cent chance of extramarital sex compared to those born in Lagos.

The age gap between married partners as a factor is not very strong. With the husbands much older than their wives as the reference category, a male respondent who is marginally older, or a female respondent who is marginally younger than the spouse is less likely to have extramarital sex. Similarly, wives who are far younger than their husbands are less likely to have extramarital sex than the reference category. Such women have only about an 8 per cent likelihood of extramarital sex compared to men much older than their wives, the result being a significant under 10 per cent probability.

The educational-gap factor is the weakest of the three variables that dropped out of the perfect model. Yet it shows that men who are much better educated than their wives are less likely to have extramarital sex than women who have this advantage over their husbands.

The explanation seems to be that for men to be better educated than their wives is not as strange as the converse situation, which is only emerging in recent times. Hence, while such educational advantage may not seriously drive a man to seek an extramarital partner, women in a similar position may be attracted to men who are educationally and perhaps socially better placed than their husbands, explaining the greater likelihood of extramarital sex among such women. A spouse whose educational qualification is equal to the partner irrespective of sex is, on the other hand, more likely to have extramarital affairs than women with higher education than their husbands. This pattern may reflect more of the orientation of men in this group than the women. Such a pattern will prevail where the wife's consciousness of equality has estranged the husband, thus impelling him to seek alternative sexual pleasure outside the home. For many Nigerian men, especially among the Yoruba, the desire is for the man to maintain educational advantage over the wife.

Among the three variables in the perfect model, the duration of stay in Lagos has the largest Wald score as well as the least significance level ($p < .001$). The next is the intimacy variable and the ethnicity variable ranks third.

For the Ethnicity variable, the 'Others' group served as the reference category. Besides the Southern Minority group which showed a lesser likelihood, the other groups, that is the Yoruba and the Igbo, have a stronger likelihood of extramarital sex than the reference category. The Igbo are more of Catholic faith while the Yoruba are a blend of Christians and Muslims; the Southern Minorities are essentially traditionalists and Christians.

Table 6
Logistic regression results of extramarital sex occurrence

| Variables/categories | Coeff. | Wald status | Odds ratio | Remark |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| ENV - (Childhood) | | 5.893* | | Not in the final model |
| Village | -1.750 | 5.28** | 0.174 | |
| Town | -.746 | 1.355 | 0.475 | |
| Lagos | 0 | | 1 | |
| SPOUSAGE | | 4.185 | | Not in the final model |
| Minimum gap (Hus/wife) | -.7036 | 1.995 | 0.495 | |
| Wives of lower age | -2.553 | 3.523* | 0.078 | |
| Large age-gap Hus. | 0 | | 1 | |
| SCHOOL-GAP | | 2.948 | | Not in the final model |
| Marginal gap (Hus/Wives) | 0.857 | 0.874 | 2.356 | |
| Hus. with higher educ. | -.037 | .001 | 0.962 | |
| Wives with higher educ. | 0 | | 1 | |
| ETHNICITY | | 9.746** | | Enters the final model |
| Igbo | .972 | 1.568 | 2.644 | |
| Yoruba | 1.469 | 3.698* | 4.347 | |
| South/Minor. | -.172 | 0.039 | 0.842 | |
| Others | 0 | | 1 | |
| INTIMACY | | 12.359*** | | Enters the final model |
| Low intimacy | 1.807 | 11.712*** | 6.092 | |
| Moderate intimacy | .216 | 0.2472 | 1.241 | |
| High intimacy | 0 | | 1 | |
| DURATION IN LAGOS | | 22.484***** | | Enters the final model |
| Men with short duration | 2.168 | 9.055*** | 8.737 | |
| Women with short duration | -.598 | 0.543 | 0.550 | |
| Men with long duration | 1.638 | 5.418** | 5.143 | |
| Women with long duration | 0 | | 1 | |
| Constant | -2.989 | | | |
| Initial Model | | | | |
| a -2 log likelihood | 220.39 | | | |
| b 2d/f | 161 | | | |
| Final Model | | | | |
| c -2 log likelihood | 168.7 | | | |
| d d/f | 153 | | | |
| e Model chi-square | 51.65 | | | |
| f d/f | 8 | | | |

Levels of significance *p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .005 ****p < .001

The Yoruba have the greatest likelihood – about four times – followed by the Igbo, with about three times to any one chance, of the reference category. This pattern of extramarital sex likelihood seems to follow the expectation, especially between the Igbo and the Yoruba. Among the Igbo, the nuptial financial expenses borne by the husband are often considerable. Hence, the fear that the husband may ask for a refund, coupled with the fact that a divorcee among the Igbo is stigmatized, leaving almost no hope of a second marriage, may be responsible for less likelihood of extramarital sex among the Igbo, especially the females. Their stronger Catholic monogamy culture also tends to encourage maximum concentration of the Igbo husband on his wife only, compared to the Yoruba husband. Despite these restraints among the Igbo, the odds ratios still show their greater likelihood of extramarital sex than the Southern minorities, particularly the Edo-Itsoko-Urhobo group, who are restrained by the fear of immediate supernatural sanctions even leading to death, thus being the only group with less tendency to extramarital sex than the reference category.

The intimacy factor follows the ethnic factor in terms of the level of its significance ($p < .005$). It shows that a couple with little intimacy is much more likely to have extramarital sex than those moderately or very intimate. The odds ratio shows that a couple whose intimacy level is low is about six times more likely to engage in extramarital sex than a highly intimate couple, but twice as likely as a moderately intimate couple. It is interesting to note that while the odds ratio for the low-level intimacy group is highly significant ($p = .001$), that of the moderate-intimacy group is not statistically significant.

The third variable in the model is the relative length of stay in Lagos, with the long-duration women as the reference category. Among the other three categories, a lesser likelihood is identified only with the women with short duration, who were about half as likely to engage in extramarital sex as the long-duration women. On the other hand, both the short and the long-duration men have a greater likelihood of extramarital sex than the long-duration women. A comparison of the odds ratios also indicates that the short-duration men are even more likely than the long-duration men to engage in extramarital sex.

This pattern is best understood when the rate at which unemployed men troop into Lagos is considered. Many of these men, who are already married, leave their wives in the village when they come to Lagos in search of employment. They seek temporary accommodation with a friend or a relation until they succeed in getting a job, and are able to pay for their own accommodation. The continuous abstinence imposed upon them by the absence of their wives, and the fact that they spend more time at home than the employed males in the neighbourhood, expose them to the possibilities of flirting with the maids of their hosts, or those of their neighbours. In extreme cases, a few even have sexual relations with the wives of their hosts. Their relatively high likelihood, about nine times the likelihood of the long-duration women, is thus highly significant ($p < .005$). The long-duration men on the other hand are about five times more likely to engage in extramarital sex than the long-duration women.

Conclusion

The extant pattern of sexual behavioural correlates of the AIDS epidemic in Lagos calls for a reassessment of the confidence which has been felt for some time in the apparently low level of the epidemic in this region. It appears that disapproved sexual activities are being practised less, given the inverse relationship between the frequency of risky sexual activities and the recency of such incidents. This, however, is far from the truth. For example, for most of the parameters examined, greater percentages of male respondents, classified by whatever socio-demographic variables, practised supra-median sexual activity, while the never-married females maintained a high degree of focus in their coital relationships.

There are other tendencies noticeable among the never-married groups which are ominous to a long-term sustenance of a low level of AIDS. First, only two variables, the educational status and the budgetary status, show some meaningful association with sexual partnership in varying degrees. The first variable shows that higher educational status tends to encourage super-medial sexual activity among men, while the converse prevails among the females. Such a pattern is observable both with the total sexual partners and with the sexual partners in the last year.

The budgetary factor, on the other hand, showed that weaker budget position is associated with a greater tendency for super-medial sexual partnership among spinsters, both in total sexual partnerships as well as sexual partners in the last year. This shows the need to explore ways by which poor unmarried women could be assisted to earn money, as the current study has confirmed their greater tendency for multi-partnership sexuality.

The observed similarities in some aspects of the total sexual-partnership (TSEXP), and that within the last year (ASEXP) for the two groups, is an indication that sexual behaviour may not have been strongly influenced by the knowledge of AIDS. A positive influence of the knowledge of AIDS on sexual behaviour will lead not only to a reduction in the number of sexual partners over time, as observed between the TSEXP and ASEXP, but also to a convergence in the number of sexual partnerships regardless of educational or budgetary status.

Although none of the other variables exhibited the type of consistency observed in the budgetary and educational factors status with respect to the structure of their 'total' and 'last-year's' sexual partnerships, such patterns as are observed for the two factors are capable of wreaking great havoc on the entire population's sexual and reproductive health. It is necessary to establish adequate information, education and communication interventionist programs.

Another highlight of sexual epidemic importance is the incidence of focus observed in sexual activity. According to the state of knowledge of AIDS epidemicity, it is not so much the sexual behaviour of the majority, as that of a few who have the capacity to socialize and intermingle sexually across socio-demographic divides that poses the greatest threat to the management of the spread of AIDS. It is in this respect that further research efforts ought to be carried out to examine the phenomenon of homogeneity or otherwise of the socio-demographic identities of the sexual partners of those involved in multi-partnership sex. Indeed, this is the fulcrum upon which the threats of AIDS seem to revolve in Lagos.

Such analysis would help in assessing the potential risk that is presently hidden by the apparently low levels of reported infection, as the incidence of multi-partnership sex is disturbingly large, even up to the fourth partnership level. The single females were particularly characterized by a strong focus element up to the fourth partner, although the relative percentages of those involved among them dwindled faster than the males' from the first partnership level to the fourth. The leakage of HIV into such a sexual network portends great danger, not only to those who are actively involved in multi-partnership sex, but also those who are unavoidably the spouses or regular partners of women or men who are involved in it.

Still other sexually-related activity, perceptions and attitudes observed among a portion of the population underscore the need for enhanced information, education and communication. In this respect, the wide variations observed between the individual's objective knowledge and his or her perception of the AIDS epidemic indicate the need to inform a substantial percentage of the population who may still have a false sense of immunity and a wrong impression of the real danger of AIDS.

It is being suggested that government and its agencies may have to involve medical

practitioners from the orthodox and the traditional schools in an intensive campaign. Both kinds of doctor may have to disclaim the false notion that they currently have any solution to the AIDS epidemic. This is very important, given the fact that the present study area is perhaps one of the largest single concentrations of enlightened individuals in Nigeria. Given the level of scepticism among its populace, it can only be imagined what the level could be in other parts of the country, particularly outside the Southwestern states, where suspicion, resentment and greater level of ignorance cause resistance to beneficial educational and re-orientation programs.

Another dimension to the problem of sexual behaviour may involve the government and public-spirited agencies. This is in connection with the danger of extramarital sexual activities. Previous studies as well as the current one have identified an inverse relationship between the degree of spousal closeness and the likelihood of extramarital relationship. The focus of the present study is limited to the analysis of spousal closeness in conjunction with other perceived variables; it would however be interesting, from an interventionist point of view, to further examine the intimacy factor independent of other factors, as a means of exploring the possibility of promoting marital harmony; this theme forms the focus of another article based on the current research. Given a clearer perception of the role of marital closeness, it may be possible to employ relevant intimacy variables to encourage better spousal closeness, that has the potential of reducing the incidence of extramarital sex.

A detailed action plan for effecting such intervention would include the establishment of family-life centres. Their primary duties would be to organize counselling sessions, exhibitions and relevant programs to help in strengthening the closeness between couples, especially those on the brink of separation. Counselling sessions could be provided on how to build a more intimate marital relationship, based upon valid research outcomes, as well as established knowledge in the area of marital education. Separate sessions could be held for couples to help the partners in understanding, loving and appreciating one another.

With proper articulation, planning and operationalization of such an idea, it is possible that the extramarital component of anomalous sex would be substantially reduced, while the possibility of disseminating HIV through it would be curtailed, thus guaranteeing a higher level of sexual health for the whole society.

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