



Knowledge Of Suicide Prevention Methods Among Senior Secondary Schools Students In Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the knowledge of prevention of suicide among Senior Secondary Schools Students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study with a population which consisted of 80,310 senior Secondary Schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District. A sample size of 1,540 was selected using the multi-stage sampling procedure. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire with a reliability index of 0.78. Percentage, and chi-square were used for the statistical data analysis. The result of the study showed that, overall, three quarter 1138(75.0%) had good knowledge of suicide prevention. The result showed that, good knowledge was found more among the older respondents (83.3%), and the males (75.5%). It was concluded that, Senior Secondary Schools Students in Rivers-East Senatorial District of Rivers State has good knowledge of suicide prevention. It was recommended that, health agencies concerned with the welfare of secondary school students should extent their attention and focus suicide prevention by organizing a health campaign on it to equip the adolescents with more knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge, Prevention, Senior Students, Rivers East.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'suicide' is being mentioned on a daily basis all over the world with different persons interpreting it within different contexts. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2018), suicide is the act of killing oneself, deliberately initiated and performed by the person concerned in the full knowledge or expectation of its outcome. Despite its deleterious effects, its prevalence across the world is fast becoming more alarming, exacerbated by the negative effects posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the world's economy. The WHO record showed that, suicide does not just occur in high-

income countries but it is a global phenomenon in all regions of the world and that over 79% of global suicides occurred in low-and middle-income countries (WHO, 2016). Also, low and middle-income countries house more than 90% of the world's children and youth and also account for other 79% of global suicide deaths (WHO, 2014). However, according to Kinnanm et al. (2016), little is known about the epidemiology of adolescent suicide and suicidal behaviour in low-and-middle income countries compared to high-income countries.

Documentation from the World Bank indicated that, suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population) in Nigeria was reported at 9.5% in 2016. The current record has it that Nigeria's population is about 3% of the world population but 6% of the world population of cannabis users and report also revealed that 14% of the world population who misuse pharmaceutical opioids are reportedly in Nigeria, thereby making Nigeria one of the countries in the world with the highest population of people who misuse tramadol and codeine cough syrup. Invariably substance abuse may become one of the leading causes of deaths in Nigeria (Vanguard News, 2020). However, the issue of taboo in relation to data of suicide is a big concern. This issue cuts across local and international communities. Randal, (2017) discovered that journalists in the United State were not reporting cases of suicide because they believed that reporting such cases would also encourage others to go and commit suicide. Campion-smith, (2015) also found out that one of the reasons why suicide cases were not reported in Canada at the time when social media was not common was because the society believed that the type of death, personality of the dead go a long way in prompting the vulnerable ones to follow the steps of the deceased by committing suicide too. Thus, there are several myths and misconceptions surrounding suicide, particularly its prevention.

According to British Broadcasting Company (2019), the cases of suicide were underreported and statistics were not available in the nineteen century because suicide was then seen as a taboo and the religious body saw it as an act that provokes fear and shame. However, across Eastern and Southern Africa since 2000, Increase in suicide rates has been noted and awareness of the need for suicide prevention is increasing even though Africa still have no baseline data from which to measure any increase. Nigeria is not left out in this health menace called suicide as Nigeria ranked 15th in the world for suicide (The vanguard, 2019), and according to WHO, (2016) Nigeria ranked 7th on the continent. While according to the report in Daily Trust, (2019) "Students top list as 42 Nigerians committed suicide in 6 months". Also, Databod, (2019) reported that in 2017 in Nigeria, 196 persons attempted suicide, 332 persons committed suicide while 31% of suicide are from Rivers state and universality makes Rivers state to have the highest suicide rate in Nigeria.

The period of adolescence is one of the rapid phases of human development. It is a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotion and relationship, and acquire attributes and abilities that would be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuring adult roles. For these adolescents to grow up as emotionally stable adults, they have to understand and know what they have to do to face challenges of life and not take their own lives as an option because, suicide is never a solution to any problem. The WHO (2015) reported that, adolescence is one of the most rapid phases of human development. It is a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships and acquire attributes and abilities that would be important for engaging the adolescent years and assuming adult roles. The World Federation for Mental Health (2019) noted, when the adolescents have knowledge about the sign of suicide and its prevention, preventing the act of suicide is inevitable. Thus, in order to create more awareness on this matter, the World Mental Day had the theme for the year 2019 tagged as "Mental Health Prevention and Suicide prevention".

In Rivers-East Senatorial Districts Rivers State, it is noted that three out of the eight local governments have the least number of secondary school and these are in the rural areas which may prevent the flow of information to the vulnerable group which is the adolescents. This lack of proper information and knowledge may expose the adolescents to all manner of negative behaviours, social vices which can invariably lead to suicide. In light of the foregoing, the researcher deemed it necessary to carry out this

study on the knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary Schools Students in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State?
2. What is the level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State based on age?
3. What is the level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State based on gender?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

1. There is no significant relationship between age and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between gender and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study with a study population which consisted of all the Senior Secondary School Students (SSS) (SS1-SS3) in the 107 Government Owned Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers East Senatorial District totaling 83,310. The data were collected from the eight L.G.A that make up the Senatorial District comprising of Emohua (9315), Etche (9674), Ikwerre (10,300), Obio-Akpor (30,756), Ogu-Bolo (786), Okrika (3850), Omuma (1917) and Port Harcourt (16,663). A sample size of 1,540 was selected for the study using the multistage sampling procedure. At the first stage, the district was clustered into 4 area based on cultural similarity as shown (Etche and Omuma), (Ikwerre and Emohua), (Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt) and (Okrika and Ogu-Bolo). Then the simple random sampling was used to select one LGA from each clusters and also the selected school. Finally, the proportionate stratified sampling was then use to select the students from each LGAs based on the population of the students in the ratio of 18%:17%, 57% and 8% respectively to make up for the of 1540.

The instrument that was used for this study is a standardized instrument titled: Questionnaire on knowledge of suicide prevention (QKSP), developed by the researcher with a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The instrument consisted of two sections; section A elicited information on demographic data of the respondents while section B contained questions to examine the Knowledge of Suicide Prevention Questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed with the aid of the IBM Statistical Product for Social Sciences (SPSS V-25) using percentage and chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below:

Research question 1: *What is the level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State?*

Table 1: Knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District

SN	Items	Responses		Decision
		Correct F(%)	Incorrect F(%)	
1	Asking for help when thinking about hurting oneself	891(58.7)	626(41.3)	Good
2	Not following bad friends	1247(82.2)	270(17.8)	Good
3	Feeling happy always	1240(81.7)	277(18.3)	Good
4	Believing that things would get better	936(61.7)	581(38.3)	Good
5	Feeling loved by family members	1185(78.1)	332(21.9)	Good
6	Forgiving those who offend me easily	1215(80.1)	302(19.9)	Good
7	If an adolescent loves going to school or feeling depressed	1045(68.9)	472(31.1)	Good
8	Speaking up when worried	1239(81.7)	278(18.3)	Good
9	If you love yourself and you are happy	1069(70.5)	448(29.5)	Good
10	Helping a friend with suicide ideation through counseling	1312(86.5)	205(13.5)	Good
	Overall	1138(75.0)	379(25.0)	Good

Table 4.1 showed the knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District. The result showed that overall, 1138(75.0%) had good knowledge of suicide prevention while one quarter 379(25.0%) had poor knowledge. Thus, secondary school students in Rivers East senatorial district had good knowledge of suicide prevention.

Research question 2: *What is the level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State based on age?*

Table 2: Knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District based on age

Items	10-14 years (N = 432)		15-19 years (N = 1061)		20-24 years (N = 24)	
	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incor.	Correct
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
Asking for help when thinking about hurting oneself	169(39.1)	263(60.9)	449(42.3)	612(57.7)	8(33.3)	16(66.7)
Not following bad friends	77(17.8)	355(82.2)	192(18.1)	869(81.9)	1(4.2)	23(95.8)
Feeling happy always	78(18.1)	354(81.9)	198(18.7)	863(81.3)	1(18.3)	23(95.8)
Believing that things would get better	163(37.7)	269(62.3)	410(38.6)	651(61.4)	8(33.3)	16(66.7)
Feeling loved by family members	92(21.3)	340(78.7)	233(22.0)	828(78.0)	7(29.2)	17(70.8)
Forgiving those who offend me easily	84(19.4)	348(80.6)	215(20.3)	846(79.7)	3(12.5)	21(87.5)
If an adolescent loves going to school or feeling depressed	133(30.8)	299(69.2)	335(31.6)	726(68.4)	4(16.7)	20(83.3)
Speaking up when worried	74(17.1)	358(82.9)	201(18.9)	860(81.1)	3(12.5)	21(87.5)
If you love yourself and you are happy	126(29.2)	306(70.8)	318(30.0)	743(70.0)	4(16.7)	20(83.3)
Helping a friend with suicide ideation through counseling	53(12.3)	379(87.7)	150(14.1)	911(85.9)	2(8.3)	22(91.7)
Overall	105(24.3)	327(75.7)	270(25.4)	791(74.6)	4(16.7)	20(83.3)

Table 2 showed the knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District based on age. The result showed that, good knowledge was found more among those aged 20-24 years (83.3%), followed by those who were aged 10-14 years (75.7%) and those aged 15-19 years (74.6%). Thus based on age, good knowledge of suicide prevention was found more among the older respondents.

Research question 3: *What is the level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State based on gender?*

Table 3: Knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District based on gender

Items	Male (N = 721)		Female (N = 796)	
	Incorrect F(%)	Correct F(%)	Incorrect F(%)	Correct F(%)
Asking for help when thinking about hurting oneself	303(42.0)	418(58.0)	323(40.6)	473(59.4)
Not following bad friends	135(18.7)	586(81.3)	135(17.0)	661(83.0)
Feeling happy always	128(17.8)	593(82.2)	149(18.7)	647(81.3)
Believing that things would get better	265(36.8)	456(63.2)	316(39.7)	480(60.3)
Feeling loved by family members	161(22.3)	560(77.7)	171(21.5)	625(78.5)
Forgiving those who offend me easily	143(19.8)	578(80.2)	159(20.0)	637(80.0)
If an adolescent loves going to school or feeling depressed	217(30.1)	504(69.9)	255(32.0)	541(68.0)
Speaking up when worried	127(17.6)	594(82.4)	151(19.0)	645(81.0)
If you love yourself and you are happy	201(27.9)	520(72.1)	247(31.0)	549(69.0)
Helping a friend with suicide ideation through counseling	93(12.9)	628(87.1)	112(14.1)	684(85.9)
Overall	177(24.5)	544(75.5)	202(25.4)	594(74.6)

Table 3 showed the knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District based on gender. The result showed that good knowledge of suicide prevention was found more among the males (75.5%) than the females (74.6%). Thus, based on gender, good knowledge of suicide prevention was found more among the male secondary school students.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between age and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State

Table 4: Chi-square test showing relationship between age and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students

Age	Knowledge		Total	df	X ² -value	P-values	Decision
	Good F(%)	Poor F(%)					
10-14 years	328(75.9)	104(24.1)	432(100)	2	2.42	0.29*	H ₀ accepted
15-19 years	789(74.4)	272(25.6)	1061(100)				
20-24 years	21(87.5)	3(12.5)	24(100)				
Total	1138(75.0)	379(25.0)	1517(100)				

*Not significant, p>0.05

Table 4 showed the Chi-square test of relationship between age and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students. The result showed that there was no significant relationship between age and level of knowledge of suicide prevention ($X^2 = 2.42$, $df = 2$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between age and level of

knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State was accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between gender and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State

Table 5: Chi-square test showing relationship between gender and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students

Gender	Knowledge		Total	df	X ² -value	P-values	Decision
	Good F(%)	Poor F(%)					
Male	548(76.0)	173(24.0)	721(100)	1	0.72	0.41*	H ₀ accepted
Female	590(74.1)	206(25.9)	796(100)				
Total	1138(75.0)	379(25.0)	1517(100)				

*Not significant, p>0.05

Table 5 showed the Chi-square test of relationship between gender and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students. The result showed that there was no significant relationship between gender and level of knowledge of suicide prevention ($X^2 = 0.72$, $df = 1$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between gender and level of knowledge of suicide prevention among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State was accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study were discussed below:

The result showed that overall, three quarter 1138(75.0%) had good knowledge of suicide prevention while one quarter 379(25.0%) had poor knowledge. This finding may not be surprising because the study was carried out among senior secondary schools students who are in an academic environment, exposed to different information including those about their health. The finding of this study is in line with that of Thormhill and Gillies, (2016) on the implication of suicide awareness education on suicide related knowledge and attitude showed that the respondents who were young adults were informed about adolescents' suicide showing a good knowledge (58.25%). The finding of this study is also similar to that of Chan et al. (2014) whose study on suicide among 165 students in Australia showed improve knowledge about suicide among students. This similarity found might be due to the homogeneity of the study respondents as the both students were conducted among students. The finding of this study is in consonance with that of Elda et al, (2015) whose study carried out an assessment of knowledge and attitude of adolescents regarding suicide showed that the students had good knowledge about suicide. This similarity found might be due to the homogeneity of the study respondents as the both students were conducted among students. The finding of this study is at variance with that of Sato et al, (2016) whose study on the knowledge and attitude towards suicide among medical students in Japan showed a poor knowledge of suicide among the students. This variation might be attributed to the difference in the study location and sample size as the previous study used a sample size of 160 whereas the present study used a sample size of 1,540, hence, the sample size used in the previous study was just one-tenth of the one used in the present study, this could be implicated for the variations found between the two studies.

The result showed that, good knowledge was found more among those aged 20-24 years (83.3%), followed by those who were aged 10-14 years (75.7%) and those aged 15-19 years (74.6%). The finding of this study is in line with that of Bathersham et al, (2013) whose study found out that older age was associated with knowledge. This study shared the same view with Chen et al, (2014). This similarity found between the present study and the previous one might be attributed to the similarity in the sample size as the both studies used a larger sample size. The result showed that good knowledge of suicide prevention was found more among the males (75.5%) than the females (74.6%). The finding of this study is in line with that of Bathersham et al, (2013) whose study found out that gender was associated with knowledge. The finding of this study is also in keeping with that of Chen et al, (2014). The finding of this

study is in line with that of Thornhill and Gillies, (2016) on the implication of suicide awareness education on suicide related knowledge and attitude showed that the respondents who were young adults were informed about adolescents' suicide showing a good knowledge (58.25%) which was associated with age. The finding of this study is also similar to that of Chan et al, (2014) whose study on suicide among 165 students in Australia showed improve knowledge about suicide among students. This similarity found between the present study and the previous one might be attributed to the similarity in the sample size as the both studies used a larger sample size and also due to the homogeneity of the study respondents as the both students were conducted among students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, Senior Secondary Schools Students in Rivers East Senatorial District Rivers State had good knowledge of suicide prevention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Health agencies concerned with the welfare of secondary school students should extent their attention and focus suicide prevention by organizing a health campaign on it to equip the adolescents with more knowledge.
2. Parents should monitor their children/wards use of the internet in order to safeguard them from negative influence of dangerous websites revealing wrong information.
3. Parents should also monitor the activities and companies kept by their children in the secondary schools, to ensure they are not fed with wrong information from bad friends on the prevention of suicide.

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