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A Five-Year Analysis of Police Records on Sexual-related Offences in Lagos state, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence is a major public health problem that calls for urgent attention in Nigeria. Surveys have shown that the prevalence of rape ranged from 4.4 to 21.3 per cent in different populations but information on outcomes of these offences have not been fully investigated. Furthermore, little is known about the nature, extent and pattern of sexual offences reported to the police. This study documented the pattern of sexual offences reported at the Metropolitan Lagos State Police Commands from 1999 to 2004. The study is descriptive and retrospective in design. Following the compilation of reported sexual offences from Crime Diary and Case Files, two pretested checklists were used to extract information on socio-demographic characteristics of perpetrators and victims and sexual context. In-depth interviews were also conducted with eighteen Police officers who are responsible for sexual offences. Statistical Analytical System (SAS) package was used to generate descriptive statistics. A total of 691 sexual offences were reported during the period under consideration. Rape accounted for 40.1% of the offences, 44% of the crimes were committed at the perpetrator's house, and virtually all victims 98.4% were females whose ages ranged from 4 to 56 years; victims were mostly neighbours to the perpetrators(42%). Only forty-seven case files were available for review as most were missing due to inadequate storage, Most(76.6%) of the Case files were withdrawn, 12.8% were under investigations, while 8.5% status were unknown. Preventive efforts that provide sexual health education that will equip young people with necessary skills to protect themselves be promoted

Key Words: sexual offence, police records, sexual violence, crime diary, case files

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a violation of human rights and a serious public health problem. The World Report on Violence and Health defines sexual violence as, "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances or acts to traffic or otherwise, directed against a person's sexuality using

coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim" (Krug *et al.*, 2002). The WHO defines coercion as a broad concept that includes psychological intimidation and threats of harm – not just physical force. As stated by the WHO and the United Nations, sexual violence includes a broad range of acts, including attempted or forced sexual intercourse, unwanted sexual contact, making a woman or child engage in a sexual act without consent, unwanted sexual comments, sexual

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molestation of children, genital mutilation, sexual harassment, forced sexual initiation, forced prostitution, trafficking with sexual purposes among others (UN Secretary General, 2006).

A growing body of evidence suggests that sexual violence is highly prevalent in all parts of the world. Studies from around the world have found that 7.0 – 36.0% of women report having experienced some type of sexual abuse in childhood (Jewkes *et al.*, 2002), and that 6.0 – 59.0% of women report having been sexually assaulted by an intimate partner after age 15 (UN Secretary General, 2006).

Sexual violence can occur in premarital, extramarital, and marital situations. Coercion often occurs in the course of routine activities in the home, neighbourhood, community, and school (Ajuwon *et al.*, 2001). Sexual assaults can be committed by adults, children, males, females, strangers, friends, acquaintances or relatives. Sexual coercion can take place at any point in a woman's life. Children as young as eighteen months old have been raped or otherwise sexually molested. Even in old age, women are not immune (Heise *et al.*, 1995).

Sexual violence against girls and women is one of the clearest manifestations of patriarchal cultural values, norms and traditions that encourage men to believe that they have the right to control women's bodies and sexualities (Connell, 2000; Jewkes *et al.*, 2002). Compared to young women of similar age who did not experience sexual coercion, females who experienced coercion are more likely to experience subsequent incidents of forced sex, as well as (consensual) sexual risk-taking behaviours including multiple sexual partners and non-use of condoms, and are consequently at increased risk of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. They are also more likely to experience poor mental health outcomes, and alcohol and substance abuse. Women who have suffered abuse in childhood or during early adolescence continue to be vulnerable to sexual coercion. A study in Nicaragua reveals that women who had experienced severe abuse before the age of 13 years were more likely than other women to report severe sexual abuse subsequently (Ellsberg, 2003). Similarly in Goa, India, students who had been abused were more likely than their peers to have experienced subsequent violence, with some reporting up to three such episodes in their lifetime (Patel and Andrew, 2001).

Reported sexual violence in all its forms causes immense damage to the reproductive health and well-being of women and girls throughout the world. Sexual violence can lead directly to serious injury, disability or death. They can also lead indirectly to a variety of health

problems, such as stress-induced physiological changes, substance use and lack of fertility control. Compared to their non-abused peers, Sexual abused women have higher rates of unintended pregnancies and abortions; sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; complications from frequent, high-risk pregnancies and lack of follow-up care, persistent gynaecological problems and psychological problems such as fear of sex and loss of pleasure, depression, anxiety, sleep and eating disorders. (Ahmed, *et al.*, 2006; Asling-Monemi, *et al.*, 2008; Campbell, 2008).

One of the underlying factors in ameliorating sexual violence in the society is prosecution in the court and awarding of punishments to the perpetrators of sexual violence. However, only few studies in this environment have investigated the sexual related offences from police records. For example, a pilot report on the review of rape incidence from police records in Ibadan, Nigeria (Shaahu *et al.*, 2004) revealed that all the incidents of rape were perpetrated by males including acquaintances (32.5%), strangers (21.6%) and neighbours (16.1%) of the victims. Adetayo (2005) reported that about 513 people were in police custody in connection with 423 cases of rape reported in Lagos State in the first quarter of the year 2005. Of the number of suspects, 134 were women and the rest were men. Investigations also showed that 423 cases represent a 72% increase on 305 cases reported during the same period in the year 2004. About 304 cases, representing 71.95% of the 423 cases reported were taken before different courts of competent jurisdiction; investigations were pending on about 119 cases, representing 28.1% of the total reported. Agams (2013) reported that in 2011, the Lagos state government with a population of almost 20 million reported 283 cases of rape out of which only 10 were prosecuted and convicted. Studies suggest more than half and sometimes as much as 84% of the female population have experienced sexual assault, rape or molestation in childhood. That is less than a 10% conviction rate and less than 0.0001% of the at risk female population.

It is important to explore this area to provide insight into what constitute sexual related offences, the types of sexual offences commonly reported to the police, context in which the offences occurred, the investigative procedures of the police and the judiciary in prosecuting sexual offences. This will assist in determining the outcomes of sexual violence reported to the police. This study therefore aims to analyse police records of sexual related offences to provide insight into the aspect of the law enforcement agencies in ameliorating sexual violence in the society.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study was descriptive and retrospective in design. Information for the study was obtained from records on sexual related offences documented from 1999 to 2004 at the Lagos State Police Commands. Also the Police officers in-charge of sexual related offences were interviewed about these offences.

Study Area

Lagos State was created in May 1967. It is bounded in the North and East by Ogun State, the Atlantic Ocean in the south and an international boundary with the Republic of Benin on the west. It covers 14,712.32 sq km. As a trading port, Lagos has a recorded history dating back to the Portuguese explorers of the 16th century. The state is composed of the Old Federal Territory of Lagos which remains the nation's financial hub and was the federal capital of Nigeria up to December 12, 1991, and the old colony province of the defunct western region of Nigeria, comprising Badagry, Ikeja, Ikorodu and Epe Divisions (FHI,2000).

The indigenous peoples of Lagos State are the Yoruba subgroups of the Awori in Ikeja, the Egun in Badagry, the Ijebu in Ikorodu and Epe, Lagos Island consists of a mixture of Benin and Eko Awori as well as repatriated Yoruba and other immigrants. In its modern form, the state is a socio-cultural melting pot that has attracted a cross-section of Nigerians from all over the federation as well as non- Nigerians from other African countries and the rest of the world (FHI,2000). Thus, Lagos State is an appropriate location to study the pattern of Sexual violence since it harbours different people from varying tribes, ethnicity, languages and religion. Also, the socioeconomic status spans across both the rich and poor.

As at 2004 when the study was conducted, there are twenty Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state. There are a total of 93 Police Stations distributed within these Local Governments in the State, comprising of 8 Area Commands and 85 Divisions. The types of offences investigated includes serious offences such as murder, malicious assault, child stealing, slave dealing, Kidnapping, Armed robbery, rape and indecent assault to less serious offences such as settling disputes and other minor offences. A special branch called the Divisional Crime Branch at each Police Divisions is designated to investigate these offences. The overall headquarter for this branch is the State Crime Investigation Department (Panti Police Station, Yaba).

Participants

Only 18 police officers in charge of sexual related offences who gave oral consents were selected and interviewed in this study. This was because most of the officers were unwilling to participate in the study. Some gave reasons that what they say might be used against them in court, while others wanted money before they can participate. Fourteen (14) of these police officers were males while 4 were females. Only Six of the IPOs had served for 5 years and below, the others had served for more than 11 years. Nine(9) of the IPOs were Constables, 5 were Corporals while 4 were Sergeants. Most of the Police officers were married(14), thirteen (13) were Christians while five(5) were Muslims. Seven (7) were Yoruba, Six (6) were Igbo while the others were Hausa, Ngas, Delta, Benin and Ogoni.

Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection

Nine metropolitan LGA were selected purposively from the twenty LGA in Lagos State, due to the limitation of time and resources. Criteria for selection were that they were easily accessible and within the available resources for transportation. The nine metropolitan LGA's selected were Ikeja, Alimosho (Idimu), Shomolu, Agege (Iso Koko), Amuwo-Odofin (Festac), Kosofe (Ketu), Lagos Island (Adeniji Adele), Lagos Mainland (Adekunle) and Mushin . The Headquarter Police Command in each selected Local Government areas was chosen, since all the other stations within the Area Command reports to the headquarter.

Review of Records

Two check lists were used to extract relevant information such as type of sexual offences, number of people involved in the crime, scene of offences, relationship of victims to perpetrators, and persons who reported to the police, from the Crime Diary and Case files respectively.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted which provided useful information about the police perceived causes, consequences of rape and outcome of report to the police; hence the information extracted by reviewing records was validated and confirmed with hands-on information and direct reporting by the officers. This clarified ambiguous and incomplete information from the records.

The in-depth interview was held at the office of the police officers in charge of sexual related offence. One police officer was interviewed at a time privately for about 20 to 45 minutes without the use of a tape recorder,

since a recorder was not allowed at the station. The in-depth interview was structured to obtain information such as the venue of the crime, types of sexual offences commonly reported, duration of investigation of reported case, outcome of investigation, the reasons perpetrators gave for crime perpetration, the factors perpetrating the offences and the roles of the police in curbing sexual offences in the society.

Data Collection Method

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. i Quantitative technique was a review of records on sexual related offences using two check lists, check list 1 and check list 2, to extract relevant data from the Crime Diary and Case files respectively.

ii. Qualitative technique was an in-depth interview of officers' in-charge of sexual related offences at each LGA's police commands.

The Procedure for Data Collection

The procedures adopted in the pilot study by Shaahu and others (Shaahu *et al*, 2004) were replicated in this study. Firstly, official approval for the study was obtained from the Commissioner for Police, Lagos State. Secondly, contacts were made with each of the selected Local Government Police Commands. At this level, relevant officers particularly the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and the Officers in-charge of sexual related offences were contacted. This was with a view to dialogue on the study objectives, methodology, expected results, and outcomes and its importance. The purpose was to create rapport as well as permission/assistance and cooperation in the execution of the study. The consent of the officers in-charge of sexual related offences was obtained orally.

A scheduled date was appointed for the actual conduct of the interview and review of records. Two trained Research Assistants were employed in the data extraction from police records. The In-depth interviews were conducted with investigating police officers (IPO) in-charge of investigating and prosecuting sexual offences. Three In-depth interviews were to be conducted in each of the LGA police commands, but due to unwillingness and unavailability of some IPOs, only eighteen interviews were conducted in all. Three in-depths interviews each were conducted in Alimosho, Kosofe and Shomolu police commands respectively. Two was conducted in Mushin and Lagos Mainland; while only one each was conducted in the others.

Data Management and Analysis

Analysis of in-depth interviews was done manually by identifying the key issues of the study. The responses of the police officers were reported as narratives, following

the key issues identified. The quantitative data analysis was done using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). Descriptive statistics were used to describe data quantitatively, such as frequency distribution, percentages and graphic presentations. Others included the measures of central tendency (e.g. mean and standard deviation). Chi-square statistics was used to test association between variables. Interpretation of the results assisted in making appropriate recommendations

Ethical Considerations

The University of Ibadan/University College Hospital Ethics Review Committee approved the study. During the review of the records, the names of the people involved in the offences were excluded to protect their privacy. Also, the names of the police officers interviewed were excluded, instead, number codes were used. Informed consent was obtained from the Officers in-charge of sexual related offences at each of the selected LGA's Police Commands. Approval was also obtained to conduct the study at the selected LGA's Police Commands. Since the study depended majorly on extracted data from already existing records, there was no maleficence to the people involved in the crime

RESULTS

Sexual violence reported at the Metropolitan LGA Police commands

A total of 691 sexual offences were reported with rape accounting for 277(40.1%), followed by defilement 217 (31.4%), indecent assault on females 121 (17.5%) and attempt to rape 61(8.8%), while indecent assault on male 8 (1.2%), attempted defilement 6(0.9%), and indecent practices between males 1(0.1%) were reported least as presented in Table 1. The distribution of sexual offences from available case files is also shown in Table 1. A total of 47 sexual offences was seen, out of which rape highest 23 (48.9%), followed by defilement 14 (29.8%), attempt to rape 4 (8.5%), and indecent assault on male 2 (4.3%). Findings from both sources revealed that both rape and defilement were mostly reported.

Socio-demographic profiles of victims and perpetrators

Results showed that victims were mostly females 680 (98.4%), while males were only 11(1.6%). On the contrary, the perpetrators were mostly males 689(99.7%) while females were only 2 (0.3%).

The age distribution of the victims is presented in Table 2. Majority of the victims were less than 13 years

114(67.1%) and between 14 -19 years 51(30.0%). The mean age of the victims was 11.5 (SD 6.6) years. Most of the data on the age of perpetrators were not available, however, from the available findings, majority of the perpetrators were between 20-29 years 5(62.5%) and 14-19 years 2(25.0%). The mean age was 22.7 (SD 3) years

Table 1:
Pattern of Sexual violence reported at the metropolitan LGA Police commands in Lagos State

Type of sexual offences	Crime Dairy		Case Files	
	F	%	F	%
Rape	277	40.1	23	48.9
Defilement	217	31.4	14	29.8
Indecent assault on female	121	17.5	4	8.5
Attempt to rape	61	8.8	4	8.5
Indecent assault on male	8	1.2	2	4.3
Attempted defilement	6	0.9	-	-
Indecent practices between males	1	0.1	-	-
Total	691	100	47	100

F = frequency

Table 2:
Age Distribution of Victims

Age	Crime Dairy		Case Files	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<13	114	67.1	20	42.6
14-19	51	30.0	18	38.3
20-29	4	2.4	7	14.9
30-39	-	-	-	-
40-49	-	-	-	-
>50	1	0.6	2	4.3
Total	170	100	47	100

Findings from the available case files showed the occupation of victims and perpetrators (Table 3). Majority 23(48.9%) of the victims were students. Others included apprentice 5(10.6%), trader 5(10.6%), house helps 3(6.4%) and those without job were 3(6.4%). Majority 14(29.8%) of the perpetrators were artisans and 9(19.1%) were students

Context of sexual offences

The time of perpetration of crime from the findings shows that 231 (33.4%) of the sexual offence took place during the day while 180(26.0%) took place at night. Also, most 272(49.4%) were reported to the police on the same day, 133(24.1%) was reported after 1 day, 104(18.9%) was reported between 2 -10 days of perpetration of crime. Also, 27(4.9%) was reported between 11-31 days of crime while 15(2.7%) was reported after 31 days of crime. The nature of perpetration of sexual offences shows that most 574(93.2%) of the sexual offences was single perpetration while 42(6.8%) was gang perpetration.

The scene of sexual offences is presented in table 4, nearly half 301 (43.6%) of the perpetration was at the perpetrator's house, 172 (24.9%) were at victim's house while 70 (10.1%) were perpetrated at the street. Also, nearly half 161(42.0%) of the perpetration was perpetrated by a neighbour to the victim, 72 (18.8%) were strangers, 72 (18.8%) were acquaintance, 30 (7.8%) were boyfriends of victims, while 20 (5.2%) were street boys. Others 28 (7.3%) were teachers, family members, guardians, police officers, security guards and doctors of the victim. Similarly results is shown from the case files, most 16 (34.0%) were acquaintance, 13 (27.7%) were strangers, 9 (19.1%) were boyfriend and 6 (12.8%) were neighbours.

Table 3:
Occupation of perpetrators and victims

Occupation	Perpetrators		Victims	
	F	%	F	%
Artisan	14	29.8	1	2.1
No data	9	19.1	3	6.4
Student	9	19.1	23	48.9
Trader	4	8.5	5	10.6
Commercial driver	3	6.4	-	-
Mechanic	3	6.4	-	-
No job	2	4.3	3	6.4
Security	2	4.3	1	2.1
Civil servant	1	2.1	-	-
Apprentice	-	-	5	10.6
Hawker	-	-	2	4.3
Clergy	-	-	1	2.1
House helps	-	-	3	6.4
Total	47	100	47	100

Table 4:

Scene of sexual violence and relationships of perpetrator to victim

Variable	Crime Dairy		Case Files	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Scene of sexual violence				
Perpetrator's house	301	43.6	28	59.6
Victim's house	172	24.9	5	10.6
On the street	70	10.1	4	8.5
At the market/ in the shop	34	4.9	4	8.5
No data	43	6.2	-	-
*Others	71	10.3	6	12.7
Total	691	100	47	100
Relationships of perpetrator to victim				
Neighbours	161	42.0	6	12.8
Strangers	72	18.8	13	27.7
Acquaintances	65	17.0	16	34.0
Boy friends	30	7.8	9	19.1
Street boys	20	5.2	-	-
**Others	35	9.2	3	6.4
Total	383	100	47	100

*Unknown place, motor park, office, bush, night party, hotel, church/mosque, cinema hall, uncompleted building, school.

**family member, boss at work, teacher in school, colleague

Table 5:

Persons who reported sexual violence to police and status of available case files

	Frequency	Percent
Relation		
Family member	348	50.5
Victim	275	39.9
Guardian	22	3.2
Neighbour	22	3.2
Police officer	13	1.9
Passer-by	5	0.7
Friend	4	0.6
Total	689	100
Status		
Unknown	4	8.5
Case withdrawn	36	76.6
Case under investigation	6	12.8
Perpetrator absconded	1	2.1
Total	47	100

The relationship of persons who reported to police with the victim (Table 5) shows that most 348 (50.5%) were family members, 275 (39.9%) were the victims themselves, 22 (3.2%) were the guardians of the victims and neighbours respectively. Similar findings were found from the case files. The report to the police were mostly made by the family members 21 (46.7%) and victims themselves 19 (42.2%). Table 5 also shows the status of the available case files. Most 36 (76.6%) were redrawn cases, 6 (12.8%) were under investigation, 1

(2.1) was a case where the perpetrator absconded while in 4 (8.5%) status of the cases were not known.

Table 6 shows the relationship between the type of sexual offences and the scene of occurrence. The major scene of the occurrence for all the forms of sexual offences explored was perpetrators' home.

Table 7 shows the relationship between the type of sexual offences and the persons who reported to the police. The major person that reported the incident to the police for all the forms of sexual offences explored was the victim except defilement.

Table 8 shows the relationship between the type of sexual offences and the victim's relationship to the perpetrator.

Sexual context from the police experiences

With regards to the time of report, most police officers mentioned that in most cases of sexual offences, the reports were made immediately, especially when it was a case of rape or defilement. Also, they mentioned that some cases could be reported the next day of crime. One officer said, "It could be reported at any time, sometimes in the evening or in the morning time. Some come that same day or next".

Some police officer gave reasons why there might be a delay in reporting. One officer said, "Many people are ignorant that they are to report immediately, hence they delay until they consult their friends who tell them to report to the police immediately". One said ignorance could be a factor, "some report immediately while others report much later due to ignorance". Another reason given by one police officer, "Sometimes, the offence

could be discovered a day or two after it has been committed”.

Others said that the complainant are not really interested in going to court, they just want the police to threaten the perpetrators. They explained that they do not want the “trouble of the court”. One police officer stated that, “some parents come immediately they observe strange behaviours in their child and after close interrogation with her, she confesses. At times it could be many days later when it is difficult to prove a case”.

The police officers mentioned that the cases can only be charged to court if the report was made immediately and the evidences were not destroyed. One police officer said, “There is a major problem that does prevent

successful prosecution of most of the sexual related cases. The problem is that most of the victim ignorantly destroy vital evidences by washing their private parts before obtaining medical reports and delayed report to the station”.

Most mentioned that evidences needed to proof a case of sexual offence such as rape and defilement included medical examination report from a general hospital (not private), presence of sperm and tear in the vaginal. Others included signs of struggle on the scene, injuries and bruises seen on the body of the victim, torn pants and cloths, blood stains on the pants and neighbours testimony that victim raised alarm.

Table 6

Relationship between the type of sexual offences and the scene of occurrence.

Type of sexual offences	Perpetrator’s house	Victim’s house	Roadside	**Others	Total	X ²	DF	P-VALUE
Defilement	120(23.1%)	12(2.3%)	7(1.4%)	17(3.3%)	156(30.1%)	44.293	9	0.001
Indecent assault on female	42(8.1%)	7(1.4%)	19(3.7%)	19(3.7%)	87(16.8%)			
Rape	115(22.1%)	17(3.3%)	32(6.2%)	59(11.4%)	223(43.0%)			
*Others	24(4.6%)	7(1.4%)	12(2.3%)	10(1.9%)	53(10.2%)			
Total	301(58.0%)	43(8.3%)	70(13.5%)	105(20.2%)	519(100.0%)			

*Attempt to rape, Indecent assault on male, attempted defilement, indecent practices between males

** Market, unknown place, Motor Park, office, bush, night party, hotel, church/mosque, cinema hall, uncompleted building, school

Table 7

Relationship between the type of sexual offences and the persons who reported to the police.

Type of sexual offences	Family member	Victim	Guardian	**others	Total	X ²	DF	P-VALUE
Defilement	170(24.7%)	21(3.1%)	12(1.7%)	13(1.9%)	216(31.4%)	136.113	9	0.001
Indecent assault on female	42(6.1%)	70(10.2%)	2(0.3%)	7(1.0%)	121(17.6%)			
Rape	113(16.4%)	143(20.8%)	7(1.0%)	14(2.0%)	277(40.2%)			
*Others	23(3.3%)	41(6.0%)	1(0.15%)	10(1.5%)	75(10.9%)			
Total	348(50.5%)	275(40.0%)	22(3.2%)	44(6.4%)	689(100.0%)			

*Attempt to rape, Indecent assault on male, Attempted defilement, Indecent practices between males

** Neighbour, Police officer, Passer-by, Friend

Table 8:

Relationship between the type of sexual offences and the victim's relationship to the perpetrator

Type of sexual offences	Neighbours	Street boy	Boy friend	stranger	Acquaintance	**Other	Total	X ²	p
Defilement	68(17.8%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.8%)	17 (4.4%)	19 (5.0%)	11 (2.9%)	119 (31.1%)	47.94	0.001
Indecent assault on female	34(8.9%)	1 (0.3%)	5 (1.3%)	11 (2.9%)	11 (2.9%)	10 (2.6%)	72 (18.8%)		
Rape	44(11.5%)	16 (4.2%)	15 (3.9%)	38 (10.0%)	31 (8.1%)	12 (3.1%)	156 (40.7%)		
*Others	15(4.0%)	2 (0.5%)	7 (1.8%)	6 (1.6%)	4 (1.0%)	2 (0.5%)	36 (9.4%)		
Total	161(42.0%)	20 (5.2%)	30 (7.8%)	72 (18.8%)	65 (17.0%)	35 (9.1%)	383 (100.0%)		

*Attempt to rape, Indecent assault on male, Attempted defilement, Indecent practices between males

** family member, boss at work, teacher in school, colleague at work

Persons who reported sexual violence to police

The police views about persons who reports to the police was established. Most police officers reported that defilement is mostly reported by parents or guardians while rape is often reported by the victims themselves. Some IPOs also included neighbours. In the words of a police officer, "Victims themselves report rape cases, or at times, their relatives report on their behalf, while in the defilement cases, the parents of the victims report the crime". Another police officer further explained, "If the victim is under aged i.e. less than thirteen years, it is most often the parents who reports together with the victim".

Relationship of victims to perpetrators of sexual violence

Most IPOs agreed that sexual offences takes place among people who know themselves, "they are usually neighbours in the same compound". The IPOs further mentioned that they could also be boyfriends and girlfriends, or acquaintance. One said, "Defilement often occurs with older men seducing the young children in their neighbourhood by buying biscuits or giving them money worth of ₦5 to ₦20". Most stated that in the cases of rape, strangers are mostly the perpetrators.

Scene of crime of sexual violence

Some IPOs reported that sexual offences often take place in the perpetrator's house and at the victim's house. Other places mentioned included garages, parks, market places. One police officer said, "It also takes place under bridges and other hideouts where area boys sleep". In the words of one, "Generally, most of the offences are being committed in highly populated areas without adequate

social amenities such as housing, water and electricity. It is also common in areas where youths are involved in drugs and left to their own devices".

Police investigations of sexual violence

Most IPOs mentioned that sexual offences are investigated immediately they are reported to the station. The case is admitted and the details of the case such as the name and addresses of complainant, victims and suspects (perpetrators) are obtained. A senior police officer details a constable for apprehension of the suspect i.e. the perpetrator is invited to the police station. Meanwhile, the victim is taken to the State General Hospital for doctor's examination and medical report. An IPO from the Divisional Crime Branch (DCB) is detailed to investigate the crime. The IPO then prepares a case file, takes statement of complainant and suspects separately.

The statement of the complainant is taken voluntarily under caution i.e. they are neither beaten nor harassed. At the same time, the IPO interrogates him. Afterward, the accused (perpetrator) is then taken before a senior police officer (one star upwards) who read back the accused statement. If the accused confirms the statement, the senior officer endorsed it with a red biro. Minutes of the case file are sent to Inspector of crime while Inspector of crime report instructions back the crime officers. If the case is very sensitive, as in the cases of rape and defilement, the Divisional Crime Officer (DCO) and the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) are minute. Sensitive cases of this nature are charged to court or transferred to the State Criminal Investigating Department CID (i.e. Panti Police Station).

In the words of one IPO, “The police do not always call for settlement of sexual offences because in the criminal code it carried a serious punishment-Life Imprisonment, hence the offences are often charged to court”. In a situation where the families of the victim do not want a court case, then the police may allow them to settle out of court amongst themselves. In such cases, the police makes both parties write down their intentions and they make an undertaken by signing an agreement that the perpetrator will not engage in such a crime again and will be responsible for the payment of medical bills for the victim.

However, most of the IPOs reported that settlement out of court is not encouraged. Reason why they sometimes allows settlement was stated by one IPO, “The police most times encourages the law to take its course, but due to the type of society we are in, the relatives and friends often plead for the cases to be settled out of court. They pressure the complainant to withdraw the charges and when victims agree, the police allow settlement out of court”.

Most of the IPOs mentioned that investigations of cases could take about 2 to 3 days. However, this period could be prolonged in cases where the medical report was not obtained immediately and where the perpetrator absconded. In the words of one IPO, “The time defers depending on the nature, in some cases, the victim may be unconscious, induced with charms, drugs in drinks or food. Investigation will be delayed in these types because the victim will first be revived. Another delay could be in cases were the suspect escapes and is at large, “time might be wasted in searching and arresting him”.

Outcome of reported cases of sexual violence

Most IPOs affirmed to the presence of prosecution witness in court and they included the complainant, the investigating police officers, the prosecuting lawyer, the living witnesses who were present at the scene of offence, and the doctor who examined the victim. Most of the IPOs mentioned that the sexual offences could take a number of years before it is prosecuted. In the words of one IPO, “The judiciary arm of the Government is very weak in Nigeria. Cases of 1999 are still in court. The magistrate always adjourns the cases for so many times that it takes so long. At the end of the day, the complainant gets tired and stops showing up for court seating and the suspect (perpetrator) remain in the court custody in the prison. Before his case could be heard, he would have stayed in the prison for at least one year”. Another narrative said, “if bail is granted the perpetrator, it could be taken to be the end of the case because the lawyer may give a very long period for the

case seating in court. Also, the court will adjourn the case in most cases if perpetrator says he is guiltless. Hence, the time the court dispense these cases is usually not predictable”.

The police mentioned other factors that lengthen the time it takes the court to dispense the case. They included the political instability of the country. They explained that the court could go on strike at any time and the cases remain pending. They further said that when complainant, witness or the IPO do not turn up on the scheduled times by the court, the case would be adjourned. They mentioned that most times the police loose track of these cases in court because of the time it takes for prosecution. One IPO said, “Sexual offences are very sensitive because the punishment is life imprisonment and they usually take years before punishment is awarded to the perpetrator”. Most of the IPO reported that only few of the perpetrators of sexual cases eventually get jailed for life. They reported that for most of the sexual offences, outcomes are unknown but that the courts and the State CID may provide this information.

Reasons perpetrators give for sexual offences

Most of the IPO reported that perpetrators often deny allegations but that they later confess after serious interrogations. Furthermore, they reported that in most cases, the perpetrators blame the devil. One IPO said, “Sometimes, they deny openly, but the medical report often reveals the extent, then they say it is the temptation of the devil”.

Other reported reasons included drunkenness, insanity, ignorance, uncontrolled sexual urges and also that it was intended to punish their girlfriends that had bruised their egos. One IPO said, “Always, the perpetrators respond that it is devil’s work, others explain that they wanted to punish the girl for refusing to be their girlfriends”.

Factors contributing to the offences and how the society influences its perpetration

Most of the IPOs reported that economic situation of the country is a major factor to the perpetration of sexual offences. One IPO said, “Poverty in the society is a major contributing factor. In the society, the poverty level is so high, parents go in pursuit of money and leave their children to their own devices, no time to properly train and bring up their children, or even to protect them from harm”. Other factor that was reported was a lack of parental care. One IPO further explained this factor, “Some parents don’t take good care of their children, especially their daughters. This is common among parents of low socio-economic status, who leave home early in the morning and come back late in the evening.

They often leave the children to themselves, some ask their neighbours to look after them, and most times, these neighbours perpetrate the offences". Most IPOs also reported peer pressure and bad company young people keep as a factor. One of the IPO said, "Some of these friends encourage the boys to gang rape, and the girls to prostitution and other immoralities".

Amongst other factors that were reported by the IPOs included idleness, joblessness, influence of drugs and alcohol, indecent mode of dressing, environmental influence i.e. area in which young people lives, child labour; for example sending girls to hawk on the street and housing type, "face me I face you". The housing type was reported by most of the IPO as a factor that encourages perpetration of sexual offences by neighbours". One IPO mentioned that ignorance of the severity of the punishment awarded to sexual offences is a factor, "The perpetrators themselves say they do not know the weight and implications, if they had known, they would have behaved decently". Also, another IPO mentioned the sexual relationship of husband and wife, "When the husband has no good sexual relationship in his house, he could go out of wedlock to commit sexual offence".

When the IPOs were asked on how society influences the perpetration of sexual offences, most mentioned that unemployment, economic hardship, inadequate education on sexual issues. Others reported lack of basic programmes to rehabilitate unemployed orphans and youths, inadequate housing facilities and good schools. Another factor that was mentioned was society norms that indulge men. One IPO said, "There are no adequate community laws on ground to check the excesses of these boys in order to curb these behaviours, and to educate them on severity of the offences".

Roles of the police in curbing sexual offences in the society

Amongst the roles of the police, the IPOs reported prompt intervention and detailed investigation on receiving report of the offences, thorough investigations to earn justice for the victims, advisory services, keeping records of habitual perpetrators of the crime and sending information on particular crime to ministry of information for analysis/research that can help Government to plan ways of reducing the crime to the barest minimum.

Other mentioned roles included protection of life and property through intensified efforts in patrol. However, most reported that their duty was to make sure that the punishment accorded to the offences were awarded to the perpetrators to act as a deterrent to others and the society at large. In the words of one IPO, "The

police make sure that the suspect does not go unpunished to serve as a deterrent to others"

DISCUSSION

This study showed rape 277(40.1%) and defilement 217(31.4%) to be the most frequently reported to the police. This was similar to the report from the US department of Justice (2009) where 41.0% of incidents of rape or sexual assault were reported. Although rape reported to the police may be a tip of the iceberg of sexual coercion, many more incidences of rape occur in the society that are not reported to the police (Jewkes *et al*, 2002). A 2007 government report in England stated that estimates from research suggest that between 75 and 95 per cent of rape crimes were never reported to the police. (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2007).

Findings showed that indecent assaults on male and indecent practices between males are gradually gaining grounds in Lagos State, although only 8(1.2%) cases and 1(0.1%) case respectively were reported. However, one case reported to the police might translate to 50 not reported (Adetayo, 2005). This supports the findings from reviews of the literature that a number of boys and young men (up to 10 percent of the population studied) experienced forced sexual relations in a variety of context (Ajuwon *et al*, 2001; Jejeebhoy *et al*, 2003).

This study indicated that the perpetrator of sexual offences were mostly young males 689(99.7%), between 20 to 29 years of age. Furthermore, in the in-depth interview report, the Investigating Police Officers reported that the perpetrators could be young boys or older men. However, one said, "the age of perpetrators ranges between 15-22 years". This pattern may reflect in part that younger men tend to be more violent than older men, and that sexual violence tends to start early in many relationships. This was similar to the study by Cortes *et al* (2011) where the vast majority of perpetrators were males and 44.0% were below 18 years. Findings from in-depth interview report in this study provided reasons why these male perpetrators conduct the act. Amongst reasons given included the intention to punish girls for "refusing to be their girl friends" and "to boost their male egos". Drunkenness, insanity, uncontrolled sexual urges/desires were reported as reasons perpetrators give. Unequal gender norms have perpetuated a sense of entitlement to sex among young men and a widespread perception reported in several studies that men's sexual needs are beyond their control and demand immediate satisfaction (Ajuwon *et al*, 2001).

Regarding the age and sex of the victims, this study ascertained that young children and adolescence were at

higher risk of sexual violence. This implies that child sexual abuse is a major problem in this environment. There is a need to give girls the same skills given to the boys to bring about equity and equality in the power relationship. This will enable girls negotiate their relationships better and will contribute to a reduction in sexual violence. This finding was consistent with the survey by McCrann *et al* (2006). They found that the average age of childhood sexual abuse was 13.8 years. Findings of this study was similar to that reported in Mexico city (Billings *et al*, 2002) where 50.0% of the study population of survivor of sexual violence were adolescents. Similar findings was obtained by Tjaden and Thoennes (2000), in their study, 21.6 percent of the female victims were younger than age 12 when they were first raped, and 32.4 percent were ages 12 to 17. Thus, more than half (54 percent) of the female rape victims identified by their study were younger than age 18 when they experienced their first attempted or completed rape. Majority 14 (29.8%) of the perpetrators from results obtained from the case files were artisan and 9(19.1%) were students. Majority 23(48.9%) of the victims were students. This was similar to that obtained by Shaahu *et al* (2004) where majority of the perpetrators were students, commercial taxi/bus drivers or apprentices.

Findings in this study showed that nearly half 161(42.0%) of the perpetration was perpetrated by a neighbour to the victim. Others included strangers, acquaintance, boyfriends, street boys, teachers, family members, guardians, police officers, security guards and doctor to the victim. Although, findings from Shaahu *et al* (2004) showed that acquaintances, strangers and neighbours were the major perpetrators, neighbours perpetration 16.1% was lower to that obtained from this study. However, Zahumensky *et al*(2010) in their report on sexual assault in the woman found that in 30.0% of cases studied, the alleged perpetrator was a known person or relative. Furthermore, results obtained from the chi-square test in this study, supports that there was a significant association between sexual violence and the relationship of the perpetrators to victims. The in-depth interview result in this study found similar results. Education targeted at potential perpetrators, in particular men of known identity to the victims should be encouraged, and this should not overshadow the legal measure envisaged by the legislation.

Nearly half 301(43.6%) of the perpetration of sexual violence was at the perpetrator's house, 172(24.9%) was at the victim's house while 70(10.1%) was perpetrated in the street. Others included the school, market/shop, uncompleted buildings, unknown places, dark corners, church/mosque, toilet/bathroom, hotel rooms, railway/motor park, cinema hall, office, night party and

in the bush. Similar pattern was found from the available case files. There was a statistical significance between sexual violence and the scene where the offences took place. Findings were similar to pattern obtained by Shaahu *et al* (2004) in which more than half (54.1%) of the incident of rape occurred in the homes of the perpetrators, 21.6% took place in the victim's home and 13.5% took place along the roadside. However, Cox *et al* (2007) reported that 58.0% of rapes occurred in the victim's own home or that of a friend or relative. This shows that sexual violence can occur in any place that is suitable and where circumstances are favourable.

Findings from this study indicated that family members and the victims themselves mostly report sexual violence. Furthermore, there was a significant association between sexual offences and the persons who reported to the police. However, several studies have shown that family influence prevent reporting of cases by the victims and hence prevent its prosecutions (Jejeebhoy *et al*, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2002a). The in depth interview revealed that most times, the family members reported sexual violence to the police without the intentions of following the case to court. They only want to punish the perpetrators by locking them up in police cells for a day or two days, however, because of the shame and stigma this may bring to the family, they redraw the case from police custody. Public awareness of the problems of sexual violence would influence the reporting behaviour by parents or other closely related adults. This would encourage the reporting of sexual offences to the police for judiciary measures.

Findings obtained from the in-depth interview reported the influence of the families in the prosecutions of the cases. The relatives and friends often plead for the cases to be settled out of court. They pressure the complainant to withdraw the charges and when victims agree to it, the police allow settlement out of court. Shaahu *et al* (2004) also reported that the police stopped its investigations in a good number of sexual offences due to requests from parents or guardians who wanted such cases to be withdrawn. They explained this behaviour in the social and cultural context in Nigeria in which female victims of rape would experience great difficulty in finding a suitable spouse.

Regarding judicial outcomes of the cases, findings from the indepth interviews revealed that it could take a number of years before sexual offences is prosecuted. Reasons included the poor judicial systems and the political instability in the society. However, the findings from the available case files showed that most of the case files 36(76.6%) were withdrawn cases. This may be because of the family and societal influence. Rape and

other sexual violent behaviours are usually taboos in many cultures. Prosecuting a rape case for example, would expose the victim and her family, stigmatising them. This would affect the family honour and that of the victim, hence, they would prefer to redraw the case. Similar findings obtained by Shaahu *et al* (2004) showed that the police terminated its investigations and prosecutions of 56.8% cases because parents and guardians of the victims requested them to do so.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered:

1. Health education, counselling and services activities that address sexual violence among young people must be integrated into existing programmes and extended to reach places where young people congregate, such as in schools, health centers, outside of schools, at youth centers, in programmes for out-of- school.
2. Sexuality education activities should be implored to dispel and reverse ingrained norms of gender double standards, power imbalances and male entitlement to sex, and reinforce life and negotiation skills activities that strengthen young people's ability to protect themselves from unwanted sexual advances and to take appropriate action should such incidents occur.
3. Health education programmes should also sensitize parents, teachers and other trusted adults, the health providers and the law enforcement agencies to the importance of communicating about sexual matters with youth and of providing a supportive and non-judgmental environment.

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