

Abortion and Contraceptive Use Stigma: A Cross-sectional Study of Attitudes and Beliefs in Secondary School Students in Western Kenya

Ulrika Rehnström Loi , Beatrice Otieno, Monica Oguttu, Kristina Gemzell-Danielsson, Marie Klingberg-Allvin , Elisabeth Faxelid, Marlene Makenzius

Abstract:

Social stigma related to women's reproductive decision-making negatively impacts the health of women. However, little is known about stigmatising attitudes and beliefs surrounding abortion and contraceptive use among adolescents. The aim of this study was to measure stigmatising attitudes and beliefs regarding abortion and contraceptive use among secondary school students in western Kenya. A self-reported classroom questionnaire-survey was administered in February 2017 to students at two suburban secondary schools in western Kenya. Two scales were used to measure the stigma surrounding abortion and contraceptive use – the Adolescent Stigmatizing Attitudes, Beliefs and Actions (ASABA) scale and the Contraceptive Use Stigma (CUS) scale. 1,369 students were eligible for the study; 1,207 (females = 618, males = 582) aged 13–21 years were included in the analysis. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's χ^2 test, and the t-test were used to analyse the data. Binary logistic regression analysis was used to calculate odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI). The students reported stigma associated with abortion (53.2%), and contraceptive use (54.4%). A larger proportion of male students reported abortion stigma (57.7%) and contraceptive use stigma (58.5%), compared to female students (49.0%, $p = .003$ and 50.6%, $p = .007$, respectively). Higher scores were displayed by younger rather than older age groups. No associations were identified between sexual debut and abortion stigma ($p = .899$) or contraceptive use stigma ($p = .823$). Abortion and contraceptive use are stigmatised by students in Kenya. The results can be used to combat abortion stigma and to increase contraceptive use among adolescents in Kenya.

Keywords: Termination of pregnancy, Contraception, Stigma, Induced abortion, Kenya, adolescents

Full text:

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