

PLATO-Nigeria (WP2a): Mixed-Methods Study Exploring Menstrual Disorders among the Adolescent Girls/Women (Interim analysis)



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INTRODUCTION

Menstrual health is a vital yet often overlooked aspect of adolescent and young women's overall well-being. Menstrual disorders such as dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation), menorrhagia (heavy menstrual bleeding), amenorrhea (absence of menstruation), and irregular cycles are common among young women worldwide, with a significant impact on physical, emotional, and social health. In Nigeria, where cultural sensitivities and taboos often surround discussions about menstruation, menstrual disorders are frequently underreported and poorly managed. Many girls and young women endure these conditions in silence, resulting in disruption of their daily activities, educational setbacks, diminished quality of life, and, in some cases, long-term reproductive health issues.

The challenges associated with menstrual disorders in Nigeria are compounded by multiple factors, including limited access to accurate reproductive health information, inadequate healthcare services, poverty, and sociocultural beliefs that stigmatize menstruation. These barriers often prevent adolescent girls and young women from seeking timely medical help, exacerbating the physical and psychological burden of menstrual problems. Additionally, the lack of national attention to menstrual health within public health strategies further marginalizes this critical issue, reinforcing existing gender disparities and negatively influencing the health outcomes of young women across the country.

OBJECTIVE

To report the mental health impact of menopause in a Nigerian population.

DESIGN

A mixed-methods study was designed and conducted in Nigeria following IREB approval.

METHODS

- The interim analysis focused on the first 75 participants aged between 18-90 years residing within Nigeria.
- All participants provided informed consent and were recruited through the premenstrual symptoms screening for adolescents (PSST-A) seen in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu, Nigeria, ESUT Teaching Hospital, Parklane, Enugu, Nigeria, Federal Medical Centre, Jalingo, and Babcock University Teaching Hospital, Ilishan-Remo, all in Nigeria.
- The Qualtrics XM platform was used to collate the data followed by a descriptive analysis focused on outcomes derived from the population characteristics.

RESULTS

The mean age of the participants was 28.09 ± 8.48 years. The sample comprised of participants from the Igbo (67.1%), Yoruba, Hausa (10% each), Tiv (2.9%), Ijaw (1.4%), Hausa-Fulani (1.4%), and tribal (5.7%) communities. Approximately 75.3% were Christians (75.3%) and 10.4% were Muslims. Equal proportions were married or single (48.6%).

Of the sample, 57.1% had undergraduate qualifications, and 34.1% secondary education.

Approximately 42.5% of participants were unemployed, while 38.4% were employed full-time.

Regular menstrual cycles were reported by 44.6% during the first year of menstruation, with age at regularisation predominantly between 13-15 years.

Premenstrual symptoms (PMS) were reported by 44.6% of participants.

PMS symptoms were severe in 40% and common between the ages of 20-29 years.

The mean age of first PMS symptoms were 16.5 years. Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) was diagnosed within 4% of the sample.

CONCLUSIONS

These findings provides early insights into menstrual disorders in Nigeria that may require further exploration to better assess the associated health impacts.

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