

**285<sup>th</sup> OMICS International Conference**

# **Global Healthcare & Fitness Summit**

**July 20-22, 2015 San Francisco, USA**

## **Marital values and the spread of STIs in Nigeria: Implications for STIs preventive campaigns**

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Cultural sensitivity is increasingly recognized as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of health promotion programs all over the world. In the fight against STIs in Nigeria, the incorporation of marital values and practices tenet in the campaign programs remain one of the major assets that has remained untapped. Therefore, the understanding of marital values and practices in the Nigerian society are important towards the development and implementation of STIs preventive campaigns. This study was conducted towards understanding the positive and negative values and practices in marital institutions and how they can be effectively incorporated into STIs preventive campaigns. In-depth interview was conducted on 32 married young people who reside in Abeokuta town in South West, Nigeria. The result of the study shows that there are some marital values and practices which promote risky sexual behavior among men which leads to STIs while some curtails sexual excesses particularly among females. Some female informants indicated that some marital values and practices were promoting social cohesion and unity while others were having negative influence on the physical and psychological health of individuals. Majority of the females explained that marital values expects married women to uphold their marital vows because of the consequences attached to compromising such values. Most of the male informants testified that cultural values and practices gave married men the permissiveness to involve in extra marital affairs which contributes to the spread of STIs. The consequence of the above scenario shows that women are more vulnerable to STIs than their male counterparts. The obvious implication arising from these positions suggest the promotion of marital virtues which would result in more positive STIs behavioral change among married individuals. The conclusion is that there is a need to specifically culturally sensitize married individuals on their vulnerability to STIs while encouraging them to uphold their positive cultural marital virtues.

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## **Intimate partner violence and physical and mental health among women utilizing community health services in Gujarat, India**

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**Background:** Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant public health threat which causes injury and acute and chronic physical and mental health problems. In India, a high percentage of women experience IPV. The purposes of this study is to describe the lifetime prevalence of IPV, and to examine the association between IPV and physical and mental health well-being, among women utilizing community health services for the economically disadvantaged in India.

**Methods:** Women utilizing community health services (N=219) aged between 18 and 62 years completed a self-administered survey in Gujarat, India. Standardized instruments were used to measure perceived physical and mental health well-being. In addition, participants were asked about their lifetime experience with IPV and socio-demographic questions. Analysis was restricted to the ever-married participants who completed the questions on IPV (N=167).

**Results:** Participants with a lifetime history of IPV were more likely to have reported poorer physical and mental health compared to those without a lifetime history of IPV. More than half of the participants with an IPV history experienced multiple types of IPV (physical, sexual and or emotional IPV). While being in the highest caste was a significant positive factor associated with better health, caste and other socio-demographic factors were not associated with IPV.

**Conclusions:** Women in India face risk of IPV. Yet those experiencing IPV do not seek help or rely on informal help sources. Community health organizations may take a role in IPV prevention and intervention. Diversity of intervention options would be important to encourage more women with IPV experience to seek help.

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