

Letter to the Editor

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Dear Editor,

We read with interest the community-based survey on "Sociodemographic parameters of parents and sexual characteristics among male teenagers in Ogbomoso, South West Nigeria" [1]. This paper has highlighted this important question; therefore, we support that physicians and policy-makers must do their utmost to protect this vulnerable group.

The authors sub-grouped the adolescents into social-classes of: lower, middle, and upper class. Yet we are unable to find any explanation of how this was done and how the groups were defined. The authors have gone on to describe a statistically significant association between social class and age (at first sexual encounter), and social class and number of sexual partners. This is important. However, how can clinicians and policy makers in other African nations translate the results into their setting without a description of how the groups were defined?

We would also like to advocate more sophisticated measures of socio-economic parameters to give valid research results. This is especially important when the primary aim of the study is to find an association between an outcome and the socio-economic status. For instance, a good number of papers have validated multilateral indices to determine the financial situation of families [2]–[5]. The authors could also have used the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) to assess wealth [6]. These indices look at factors such as; monthly household expenses, TV ownership, leisure activities, and quality of primary dwelling (for example: floor type, source of water, toilet type, kitchen type, cooking method, etc.)

We feel it is a priority for researchers to develop locally valid multilateral indices of socio-economic status to ensure the validity of any associations identified to socio-economic status.

Thank you,

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