

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Sexual Harassment: The Experience of Out-Of-School Teenagers in Benin City, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Out-of-school teenage sexual harassment is a problem for both boys and girls in our society today, and the effects of this experience can affect their lives negatively in later adult life. The data on sexual harassment, particularly those on the out-of-school teenage population in Nigeria are very scanty, as a result of the sensitive nature of, and the stigma attached to the subject. This study sought to investigate the experiences of out-of-school teenagers with regards to sexual harassment in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. A survey method was used whereby a questionnaire was employed since most of the teenagers could not read. A total of 650 youths (293 males and 357 females) participated in the study. The findings indicate that sexual harassment is common out there in the streets, to the extent that it was viewed as the norm in the society by the youths. For example, 296 (83%) of all females and 152 (62%) of all males had experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment. It was also found that more females (82%) compared to 48% males experienced harassment and that anger was the most common response to the experience. The majority of the victims considered their assailants as abnormal and for the most part did not know how to handle the situation. The implications of these findings both for social/legal action and for health/sex education are discussed. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2005; 9[3]:118-127)

**Keywords:** Sexual Harassment, Out-of-School Teenagers, Sub-Saharan Africa

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