

Sexual Behavior and Its Associated Factors among Male College Youths of Pokhara, NepalBijaya Parajuli,¹ Chiranjivi Adhikari¹¹School of Health and Allied Sciences, Pokhara University, Kaski, Nepal**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: Young people are the important group for addressing sexual and reproductive health of Nepal as the proportion of youth is nearly a fifth of the total population. The issue of youth's sexual behavior and its consequences is a concern for every generation and it is likely to continue to be a challenge in the future. The study aimed to assess the sexual behavior and its associated factors among male college youths of Pokhara, Nepal.

Methods: An institution based cross sectional study was conducted among the 801 male youths of 16 colleges of Pokhara metropolitan. Probability proportional to size sampling was used as sampling strategy. A structured, pretested and sealed self-administered questionnaire was distributed among the 967 participants. The association between sexual behavior and the explanatory variables were assessed using chi square test and multivariate logistic regression.

Results: The study revealed that the substantial proportion (45.1%) of the male college youths had indulged in sexual intercourse. Nearly two third (60.4%) of the sexually active respondents had two or more than two partners. Similarly, more than half (51.61%) of those who were involved in sexual intercourse with commercial sex worker had not used condom at an every act of sexual intercourse. Age of the respondents (AOR=3.20, 95% CI; 1.06-9.66), permanent residence (AOR=2.38, 95% CI; 1.55-3.68), living arrangement (AOR=1.71, 95% CI; 1.13-2.58) and dependent for income (AOR=0.39, 95% CI; 0.24-0.63) were significantly associated with having sexual intercourse.

Conclusions: The younger male college youths living with friends, relatives or alone in temporary residences were sexually more active than their counterparts.

Keywords: *Sexual behavior, male, college youths, factors associated*

INTRODUCTION

United Nations defines youths as individuals between the age of 15 and 24 although there is no consensus in age range.¹ Young people are the important group for addressing sexual and reproductive health of Nepal as the proportion of youth was nearly a fifth (19.38 %) of the total population. In general, young people (10-24 years) constitute almost 33 percent of the total population of Nepal.² Youths are facing numerous health problems and those health problems are responsible to affect the quality of life.³ Among the various health issues risky sexual behavior developed among youths is of major concern.⁴⁻⁶

Youth sexual behavior is a public health concern because of its effect on sexual and reproductive health. The issue of youth's sexual behavior and its consequences is a concern for every generation and it is likely to continue to be a challenge in the future.⁷ It is of major concern because effects on sexuality and reproductive health among youths develops the risk of acquiring unwanted pregnancies, pregnancy related complications, abortion and propagating various STIs.⁸⁻¹⁰

World Health Organization has estimated that 50% of HIV transmission occurs among the youth of age group 15-24

years.¹⁰ It is because young people lack adequate life skills to be protected from unplanned pregnancies and STIs.¹¹ The proportion of sexual intercourse among unmarried young men increased from 17 in 2006 to 22 in 2011 and 25 percent points in 2016 thus increasing sexually active youths outside of marriage.¹³⁻¹⁵ Nepal Adolescent and Youth Survey 2010/2011 reported that one in six young people aged 15-24 had been involved in risky sexual practices such as oral, anal and paid sex and almost 13% had premarital sex of which only 46% had used contraception at the time of their first sexual intercourse.¹⁶ Youths of age group 15-24 were more likely than older men to report STI or symptom of it.¹⁵ Also the prevalence of HIV infections to age group 15-19 was 3.0% whereas to the age group of 20-24 years was 11.5%.¹⁶ These all data indicates that the sexual behavior among youths are risky. Similarly, 31.3% of sexually active youths had more than three sexual partners which in turn puts youth at high risk for STIs as that of sex workers.¹⁷

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METHODS

An institution based cross-sectional study was carried out over the period of January 2019 to July 2019 among 46 classes of 16 Bachelor and Master level colleges of Pokhara metropolitan, Nepal. The faculties included were science and technology, health and social sciences, education and management. The data were collected using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling where primary sampling unit was classroom. For the sample size calculation, the reference for the proportion of the sexually active youths was taken from the previous research which was 57%, Permitted error of 5% was taken (CI= 95%), $q=1-p$ ($1-0.57=0.43$) Therefore, $n=Z^2pq/d^2 = 1.96*1.96*0.57*0.43 / 0.05^2 = 376.63 \approx 377$. The non response of 10% was kept and design effect of 2 was used. Thus sample size was 829. The sample to be taken through the PPS sampling was 967 so as to meet the sample size of 829. The study participants were the youths of age range between nineteen to twenty four years. However the absent students on the day of survey conduction were not included in the study.

The sexual behavior part of Nepal Adolescent and Youth survey 2011/12 questionnaire was pretested among 83 participants (10% of the sample size) of the three bachelor and master level colleges that were not selected for data collection. Data were collected through the means of self-administered questionnaire at the selected colleges from March-May 2019. Before data collection one male enumerator was recruited and he was made clear about the data collection procedure and ethical considerations. During data collection, orientation of 10-15 minutes was provided in each selected class by the male enumerators. Orientation was initiated by stating the purpose of the study, instructions not to place the participant's name, college name in the questionnaire. Verbal as well as written consent to be participated in the survey was taken. The sealed questionnaires were distributed by the male enumerator and they were requested to seal the envelope after the completion of the filling and bring back the next day. Next day male enumerator collected the questionnaire returned by the respondents.

Ethical approval was taken from Institutional Review Committee of Pokhara University Research Centre. Approval letter was taken from Ministry of Social development prior to data collection on various colleges of Pokhara.

Data were entered in Epi data software and analyzed using SPSS 20 version software. Both bivariate and multivariate techniques were applied to identify the factors associated with sexual behavior among male college youths.

RESULTS

After omitting the non response related questionnaire the total respondents for the study were 801.

Table 1: Background variable (n=801)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Years of schooling		
13 -15 years	585	73
16 - 17 years	216	26.9
Faculty of respondents		
Science and technology	417	52.1
Health	37	4.6
Education	124	15.5
Management	178	22.2
Humanities and arts	45	5.6
Age in years		
19-21	576	71.9
22-24	225	28.1
Mean \pm SD= 20.66 \pm 1.42		
Permanent residence of Pokhara		
Yes	413	51.6
No	388	48.4
Marital status		
Married	37	4.6
Unmarried	764	95.4
Living arrangement		
With family	478	59.7
With friends	55	6.9
With relatives	27	3.4
Alone	241	30.1
Dependent on others for income		
Self –dependent	118	14.8
Dependent	683	85.3

More than one fourth (25.8%) of the respondents were of 13 years of schooling. More than half (52.1%) of the total respondents were from the faculty of science and technology. The mean age of the respondents was 20.66 \pm 1.42 years and nearly three fourth (71.9%) of the respondents were of age group 19-21 years. Nearly half (48.4%) of the total respondents covered in the study were not the permanent residence. Nearly one third (30.1%) of the total respondents were living alone whereas more than four fifth (85.3%) of the total respondents were dependent on others for income.

Sexual behavior of the respondents

Table 2: Nature of sexual activities performed

Nature of sexual activities performed	Frequency (N=801)
Masturbation	504
Kissing	483
Masturbation and kissing (M∩K)	451
Vaginal	361
Kissing and vaginal (K∩V)	361
Masturbation, kissing and vaginal (M∩K∩V)	357
Masturbation, kissing, vaginal and oral (M∩K∩V∩O)	173
Anal	30
Masturbation, kissing, vaginal and anal (M∩K∩V∩A)	30
Masturbation, kissing, vaginal, anal and oral (M∩K∩V∩A∩O)	29

The study shows the variation of the various sexual behavior among the youths. Among 801 respondents, 504 had experienced masturbation, 483 had experience of kissing. Similarly, 451 had done both masturbation and kissing while 361 had experience of vaginal sexual intercourse. Similarly, 361 had kissing and vaginal sexual intercourse whereas 357 had experience of masturbation, kissing and vaginal. 173 of the respondents had masturbation, kissing, vaginal and oral while 30 had masturbation, kissing, vaginal and anal. 29 youths had experienced all masturbation, kissing, vaginal, anal and oral.

Table 5: Factors associated with sexual intercourse among male college youths of Pokhara metropolitan

Variables	Sexual intercourse		χ^2 statistics	p-value	UOR (At 95% CI)	AOR (At 95%CI)
	Yes	No				
Background variables						
Years of schooling						
13-15 years	243 (41.5)	342 (58.5)	10.92	0.001*	1.69 (1.23-2.32)	0.48 (0.15-1.48)
16,17 years	118 (54.6)	98 (45.4)			1	1
Faculty of the respondents						
Science & technology	191 (45.8)	226 (54.2)	0.19	0.90	0.94 (0.70-1.27)	0.97 (0.70-1.36)
Health and social science	36 (43.9)	46 (56.1)			1	1
Education and management	134 (44.4)	168 (55.6)			1.01 (0.62-1.66)	1.19 (0.69-2.05)
Age of respondents						
19-21 years	234 (40.6)	342 (59.4)	16.35	<0.001*	1.89 (1.38-2.58)	3.20 (1.06-9.66)**
22-24 years	127 (56.4)	98 (43.6)			1	1

Table 3: Behavioral factors

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age at sexual debut (n=361)		
<15	21	5.81
16-19	222	61.49
20-23	118	32.68
Mean \pm SD= 18.09 \pm 2.04, Min=14years, Max=23 years		
Number of sex partners (n=361)		
One	143	39.6
≥ 2	218	60.4
Recent sexual intercourse (n=361)		
Within last 1 month	91	25.20
2-3 month	180	49.86
4-12 month	72	19.94
>12 month	18	4.98
Relationship with latest sexual partner (n=361)		
Wife	29	8.0
Girlfriend	295	81.7
Casual friend	6	1.7
Commercial sex worker	31	8.6

More than half (61.49%) of the respondents had their sexual debut at the age group 16-19 years. Nearly two third (60.4%) of the sexually active respondents had two or more than two partners. Nearly half (49.86%) of the sexually active respondents had their recent sexual intercourse within last two-three month preceding the survey. More than three fourth (81.7%) of the total respondents had girlfriend as their sex partner.

Table 4: Sexual intercourse with sex workers

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Respondents having sexual intercourse with sex worker(n=31)		
Married	8	25.8
Unmarried	23	74.2
Condom used with sex worker(n=31)		
Yes	15	48.38
No	16	51.61

Among the youths who had sexual intercourse with sex workers more than half (51.61%) had not used condom at an every act of sexual intercourse.

Permanent residence of Pokhara						
Yes	138 (38.2)	223 (61.8)	46.77	<0.001*	1	1
No	275 (62.5)	165 (37.5)			0.37 (0.27-0.49)	2.38 (1.55-3.68)**
Marital status						
Married	37 (100)	0 (0)	NA			
Unmarried	324 (42.4)	440 (57.6)				
Living arrangement						
With family	173 (36.2)	305 (63.8)	37.72	<0.001*	1	1
With others ^a	188 (58.2)	135 (41.8)			0.40 (0.30-0.54)	1.71 (1.13-2.58)**
Income source						
Self –dependent	83 (70.3)	35 (29.7)	36.69	<0.001*	1.85 (1.50-2.29)	0.39 (0.24-0.63)**
Dependent	278 (40.7)	405 (59.3)			1	1

^aWith friends, with relatives, alone *Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ in bivariate analysis, ** Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ in multivariate analysis, Fig in parenthesis shows percentage

The analysis showed that the variables that were statistically significant with sexual intercourse were age of the respondents, permanent residence, living arrangement, dependent for income. In comparison to the youths of age 22-24 years, youths of 19-21 years were 3.20 times likely to have sexual intercourse. (AOR=3.20, 95% CI; 1.06-9.66). Similarly, youths belonging to the temporary residence of Pokhara were 2.38 times likely to be indulge in sexual intercourse than the youths belonging to the permanent residence of Pokhara (AOR=2.38, 95% CI; 1.55-3.68). Youths living with other than family members were 1.71 time likely to be involved in sexual intercourse than those living with family (AOR=1.71, 95% CI; 1.13-2.58). The analysis showed that being self- dependent or engaged in income generating work was the protective factor (AOR= 0.39, 95% CI; 0.24-0.63).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify the sexual behaviors of the male college youths of Pokhara, Nepal especially considering the increasing trend of STI and HIV and AIDS among youths in Nepal. The findings show that nearly half (45%) of the total male college youths had experienced sexual intercourse preceding the survey. Although this findings might be under or over-reported due to its sensitive nature but the proportion of sexual intercourse among youths is more than the general expectation as per the Nepal cultural scenario.

The present study finding is similar to the study conducted among male college students of Kathmandu, Nepal where nearly half (47%) of the total respondents had experienced sexual intercourse.¹⁷ Similarly the findings is akin to the Nepal adolescent and youth survey of 2011 in which 44 percent of youths had sexual intercourse preceding the survey.¹⁸ The prevalence of sexual intercourse among youths in this study is higher than the study conducted among youths in rural India where 30% youths had sexual intercourse in the same age group of 19-24

years.¹⁹ This difference might be due to rural urban variation. But the study's prevalence is lower than the similar study conducted among youths of US, Tanzania, Thailand, Ethiopia where prevalence was 57, 70.06, 62.4 and 54.3 percent points respectively.²⁰⁻²³ This might be due to cultural differences among the countries.

This study revealed the mean age at first sexual contact among sexually active male college youths was 18 years which is consistent with the different demographic and health surveys of various countries where 51% in India, 30% in Indonesia and 60% in Nepal have sex at mean age of 18 years.²⁴ In this study 60.4% of the sexually active male college youths had two or more than partner which is in line with the findings of Kathmandu, Nepal where 54.9% had two or more partner. The study finding of multiple partner is more than the similar study conducted in than Baitadi where youths having two or more partner were 28.2 %.²⁵ This findings may be due to Pokhara is more developed city than Baitadi where youths not belonging to permanent residence are more.

The study showed that 8.6 percent of the sexually active male college youths were involved in the sexual intercourse with commercial sex worker where only less than half (48.38%) had used condom at every act of sexual intercourse. This finding is consistent with the study conducted in Kathmandu, Nepal.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that nearly half (45.1%) of the sexually active male college youths of Pokhara were indulged in sexual intercourse. The substantial proportion (60.4%) of the respondents had multiple sex partner and more than half (51.61%) of those who were involved in sexual intercourse with commercial sex worker had not used condom at an every act of sexual intercourse. This indicates that the sexual behavior of male college youths is risky. Awareness program like conduction

of safe sex campaign should be conducted by the concerned authorities as reproductive health related organizations. Behavior change strategies on the risky sexual behavior at the settings like school and colleges need to be formulated and implemented to promote the youth sexual and reproductive health.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

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