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**Predictors of early initiation of first sex among youth: Comparison study among Cameroonian and Gabonese youth aged 15-24 years****Minet Tesfai Hadish, BSN, MSN**

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**Statement of the Problem:** In Cameroon and Gabon the most highly HIV prevalent West African countries, adolescents are sexually active before age 15. The main complications of early and unsafe sexual intercourse are unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, death, abnormal sexual behaviors, and long-lasting or even lifelong mental and physical health consequences. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the predicting factors of early initiation of sex among 15-24 aged Cameroonian and Gabonese youth.

**Methods:** This study used nationally representative datasets from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) of Cameroon (2011) and Gabon (2012). A total of 14,880 youth were participated. SPSS version 22 was used to run a binary multivariate logistic regression.

**Result:** Their first sex was early, ranged from their 5th to 24th years old with a mean age of  $10.69 \pm 7.69$  in Cameroon and  $12.36 \pm 6.32$  in Gabon. Most of Cameroonian (51.5%) and Gabonese (78.4%) youth had sex before their first marriage or cohabitation. First marriage before age 15 was high among Cameroonian (36.1%) and Gabonese (25.6%) youth. On multivariate analysis, age, place of residence, educational level, religion, marital status, wealth index, occupation, comprehensive HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitude towards people living with HIV of respondents were found to be significant predictors sex before age 15, premarital sex and marriage before 15 variables. Comparing by gender, Cameroonian and Gabonese males were more likely to have higher premarital sex and sex before age 15. However, Cameroonian males (AOR=0.23,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Gabonese males (AOR=0.20,  $p < 0.001$ ) were less likely to be married before age 15 than their female counterparts.

**Conclusion:** In this study, the predicting factors of early initiation of sex among youth were contextually related to the demographic and sociocultural background of the participants, and therefore, designing sexual health education based on their different needs is crucial. Besides, parents and school collaboration can be a fundamental tool to prevent the early initiation of sex among youth.

**Biography**

Mr. Minet Tesfai Hadish has graduated his Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from School of Nursing, Asmara College of Health Sciences, Asmara, Eritrea with a very great distinction and awarded Gold Medal in 2010. He has worked in the same college for six years as an assistant lecturer; nurse practitioner, class room instructor, researcher, clinical teacher and course coordinator, as well as member of the executive committee for research coordination of the school of nursing and the college. He is active member of the Eritrean Nurses Association (ERINA) and in close association with BDHO; the Eritrean National HIV/AIDS Association as Trainer and Consultant. Currently, he is studying Master's of Nursing Science at School of Nursing, Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China.

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