

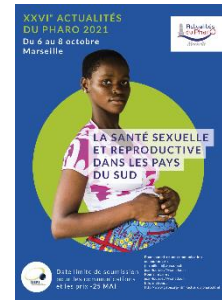
## Actualités du Pharo 2021 – Session 2

### Knowledge, attitudes and practices of adolescents and young people in the departments of Couffo and Atlantique in Benin

Keywords: knowledge, sexual and reproductive rights, tolerance, gender, sexual diversity, adolescents and youth

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**Introduction:** In Benin, sexual and reproductive health indicators for adolescents and young people are not good. To help rectify the situation, the health programme of the Belgian Development Agency launched a study to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of adolescents and young people aged 10-24 years with regard to sexual and reproductive health in the departments of Atlantique and Couffo.

**Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional survey with a stratified random survey by commune and at two levels: the primary units being schools and learning centres, and the secondary units, classes. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire digitised on KoboCollect and administered face-to-face to subjects aged 10-24 years. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed to determine factors associated with knowledge of sexual rights and reproductive physiology and attitudes towards gender and sexual differences.

**Results:** Of 1038 adolescents and youth surveyed, only 18.6% had good knowledge of sexual rights (assessed on a series of 21 questions related to sexual rights); 19.9% had good knowledge of reproductive physiology, 6.5% had good knowledge of STIs and 65.2% knew about contraceptive methods. In terms of attitudes, 15.6% had a positive attitude towards gender equality, only 7.5% had a good tolerance towards homosexuality and LGBTQI and 9.8% would abort an unwanted pregnancy. Just under half of the subjects (46.3%) had a sexual partner at the time of the survey, 15% of whom had two or more partners, 42.3% had already used a modern contraceptive method, but in 94.1% of cases this was the male condom. Going to a friendly centre ( $ORa=2.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), talking to friends about sex ( $ORa=2$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) and regular access to the internet ( $ORa=2$ ,  $p=0.01$ ) were associated with better knowledge of sexual rights. Regular access to the internet was associated with a better tolerance of differences in sexuality ( $ORa=3.3$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), as was being female ( $ORa=2.0$ ;  $p=0.009$ ).

**Conclusion:** Adolescents and young people in the two departments surveyed have little knowledge of sexual rights, reproductive physiology and STIs. Tolerance for differences in sexuality is very low and the use of contraceptive methods needs to be improved to combat unplanned pregnancies.