

0900 **PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SAFETY BY SENIOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTHS OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IBADAN, NIGERIA**

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**Introduction** In an unsafe environment, youths are denied the opportunity to develop psychosocially, and intellectually. This study sought to find out the perception of senior in-school youths about community and school safety.

**Methodology** Cross sectional study of senior in-school youths was carried out using a total sample of consenting students. A self administered questionnaire was used to elicit information on socio-demographic characteristics, perception of and characteristics of safe communities and schools.

**Results** The mean age of respondents was 16.41.6 years and 54.7% were females. Majority (62.4%) live in densely populated area. Only 182 (50.0%) perceived their school to be safe, 154 (42.3%) perceived it to be unsafe and 28 (7.7%) couldn't make up their minds. However, 265 (72.8%) reported their communities as safe, 66 (18.1%) as unsafe and 33 (9.1%) had no opinion. The most important perceived feature of a safe community mentioned was security 209 (57.4%) and 22.5% of youths have ever been molested. Within 6 months preceding study, 50 (13.7%) had felt unsafe and those reporting incidents like rape, street robbery, drug use and youth gangs as occurrences in their communities were 111 (30.5%), 127 (34.9%), 167 (45.9%), 151 (41.5%) respectively. Street lights, Zebra crossings and side-walks were absent in 81%, 83.8% and 56.9% of the communities respectively.

**Conclusion** More youths perceived their schools to be unsafe. The prevalence of drug use and youth gangs was quite high in neighbourhoods. Further researches on school safety are desirable while governments and communities should begin to collaborate on safety issues.