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Prevalence of premarital sex and associated factors among out-of-school youths (aged 15-24) in Yabello town, Southern Ethiopia: A community based cross-sectional study.

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Abstract
Background: Youth is in a state of rapid physical and psychological change. They have curiosity, enthusiasm and urge to experience new phenomena. As a result, they are more likely to be exposed to serious problems including premarital sex with its consequences. So, the aim of this study is to assess prevalence of premarital sex and associated factors among youth residing in Yabello town, southern Ethiopia.
Methods: A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted from august 10-25, 2012 among out of school youths residing in Yabello town, Southern Ethiopia. Systematic sampling technique was used to select, a sample of 402 participants. Data were collected using a structured and pretested questionnaire by face-to-face interview technique. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were performed to check associations and control confounding.
Result: from total of 402 respondents, 289(71.9%) of the respondents were reported to practiced premarital sex. Being male (AOR= 3.20, 95%CI=1.76, 5.82), being employed (AOR= 6.9, 95%CI= 2.40, 19.84) and having sexually experienced peers (AOR= 1.96, 95%CI, 1.13, 3.42) were found to have significant association with premarital sex.
Conclusion: Prevalence of premarital sex among out-school youth was found to be high. Being male, being employed and having sexually experienced peers were significantly associated with premarital sex. Rising awareness of youth on the consequence of premarital sex by providing gender balanced information, and encouraging youth to select right friends (peer) were recommended in order to reduce the proportion of youth practicing premarital sex.

Keywords: prevalence, out of school youth, premarital sex, Associated factors, Southern Ethiopia.

1. Introduction
The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescent people as those ages between 10 to 19 years old and young people as 10-24, the youth as those population aged 15-24 years [1].
Youth are in a state of rapid physical and psychological change. They have curiosity, enthusiasm and urge to experience new phenomena. As a result, they are more likely to be exposed to serious problems that include unsafe/unprotected sexual practice, early sexual debut, early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and various venereal diseases and most importantly to HIV/AIDS pandemic [2].
Worldwide 16 million girls were giving birth aged 15-19 with high risk of dying from pregnancy related causes. Forty percent (40%) of new HIV infection reported in 2009 was among youth aged 15-24 and every day 2400 youth are being infected with HIV worldwide. In addition, only 36% of young men and 24% young women have comprehensive knowledge they need to protect themselves from acquiring HIV [3].
In countries where HIV/AIDS is spread mainly through heterosexual transmission, most people become infected by the time they are in their 20 or 30 years and die within a decade [4].
Ethiopia is one of the countries hardest hit by the HIV epidemic. According to 2011 EDHS, the national HIV prevalence rate was found to be 1.5% with Youth HIV prevalence of 1.0%. In Ethiopia only 24% of young women and 34% of young men have comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDS. In addition, 5% of young women and 13% of young male reported to be engaged in premarital sex [5].
Report from Ethiopia showed a considerably higher proportion of out-of-School youth than in-school youth engage in unprotected intercourse [6]. In addition, limited research was conducted without school youth residing in pastoral communities. So, this research is aimed to assess prevalence of premarital sex and its contributing factors among out of school youths in

Yaballo town.

2. Methods

A community based cross sectional study was carried out from August 10 -25, 2012 among out- of- school youths in Yaballo town. Yaballo town is the capital of Borana zone, is located 573 km Southeast of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. The town has two kebeles with 4426 households. The total population in the town is 17,497 (9398, male and 8099 female) [7]. According to town health office the total number of youth (from 15-24 age) is 5,064 (2,872 male and 2,192 female) with 1690 out of school youth.

Sample size was determined by using a single population proportion formula which took the following assumptions into consideration. Proportion of premarital sex was taken to be 50% (p=0.5) since there was no study conducted in a such pastoralist area, 95% level of confidence (Z=1.96); 5% marginal error (d = 0.05).The sample size was calculated by using EPI INFO computer Software version 3.5.1 and non response rate of 10% was considered. The final sample size was 423. After the lists of out of school youths were obtained from town health office, systematic sampling method was employed. Finally, 402 participants were included in the study with non response rate of 4.07%.

Data were collected, after questionnaires were pre tested and training was given to both data collectors and supervisors, through face to face interview. Data were entered into EPI data version 3.1 and exported to SPSS version 16.0 software package for analysis. The data were analyzed using both binary and multiple logistic regressions to determine the effect of various factors on the outcome variable and to control confounding effect. The results were presented in the form of tables, figures and text using frequencies and summary statistics such as mean, standard deviation and percentage to describe the study population in relation to relevant variables. The degree of association between independent and dependent variables were assessed using odds ratio with 95% confidence interval.

Ethical approval was obtained from Research, Ethical Committee (REC), School of Public Health, College of Health Science, Addis Ababa University. Written consent was obtained from the Yabello town health office and respective kebeles. The consent form of the questionnaire was read to each participant, and the participants who were agreed were included in the study and all this consent procedure were documented on each questionnaire. Confidentiality was assured before conducting the data collection. Voluntary verbal consent was obtained because the study doesn't adversely affect participants' rights and welfare. This procedure of voluntary verbal consent was approved by Research, Ethical committee of School of Public Health, College of Health Science, Addis Ababa University.

3. Result

3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

From all 423 respondents selected, 402 were included in the analysis, giving a response rate of 95.03%. The mean age of the respondents was 19.4 years (SD ± 2.1 years). The majority of the respondents were female 269 (66.9%), Christian by religion 308 (76.6%), Oromo by ethnicity 310 (77.1%). Concerning the parents' education, 214 (53.2%) fathers and 234(58.2%) mothers of respondents were illiterate.

Regarding the living arrangements, the majority, 309 (76.9%) of youths were living with their parents and the main source of respondents' income were from parents 204(50.7%) (Table: 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristic of Out of school youths (N=402) in Yaballo Town, Southern Ethiopia, August, 2012.

Variables	Frequency (%)
Age	
15-19	201 (50.0)
20-24	201(50.0)
Sex	
Male	133 (33.1)
Female	269(66.9)
Religion	
Christian	308(76.6)
Wakefata	65(16.20
Muslim	29 (7.2)
Ethnicity	
Oromo	310(77.1)
Burji	33(8.2)
Amhara	22(5.4)
Gurage	20(4.9)
Other	17(4.2)
Respondent's education	
Uneducated	15 (3.7)
Primary education	113 (28.1)
Secondary education	218 (54.2)
Tertiary education	56 (13.9)
Fathers education	
Uneducated	214 (53.2)
Primary education	115 (28.6)
Secondary education	66 (16.4)
Tertiary education	7 (1.7)
Mothers education	
Uneducated	234 (58.2)
Primary education	121 (30.1)
Secondary education	39 (9.7)
Tertiary education	8 (2.0)
Living arrangement	
With parents	309 (76.9)
Alone	52 (12.9)
With friend	41 (10.2)
Source of income	
Self supporter by working	172(42.8)
Receive from parent	204(50.7)
Receive from relative	26(6.5)

3.2 Sexual behavior of youth

Two hundred eighty nine (71.9%) reported having had premarital sexual intercourse at the time of the survey with almost one third of the respondents used no contraceptive at all. Out of those who practice premarital sex, the majority, 189 (62.97%) reported that their first sexual partner was a boy/girlfriend and whereas 204 (70.5%) had their first sexual intercourse between the ages of 15 and 17 years. When respondents were asked about the number of sexual partners, 179 (61.93%) of them reported that they had only one sexual partner while 87 (30.10%) had two to four sexual partners in their lifetime. Concerning substance use, the majority, 256 (63.7%) chew khat while 152 (37.8%) drink alcohol. In addition, majority of the respondents 238 (59.2%) were exposed to pornographic film and 246 (61.2%) have friends who were engaged in premarital sex (Table: 2).

Table 2: percentage distributions of sexual behaviors of Out-of-school youths (N=402) in Yaballo Town, Borana Zone, Oromiya, 2012

Variables	Frequency (%)
Premarital Sex	
Yes	289 (71.9)
No	113 (8.1)
Age at first sex(n=289)	
Less than 15	66 (22.8)
15-17	204 (70.5)
18 years and above	19 (6.5)
Age of partner (n=289)	
older than 10 yrs	24 (8.30)
Older than 5 yrs	38 (13.1)
Younger than me	153 (52.9)
Equal with me	70(24.3)
Don't know	4 (1.4)
Sexual partner (n=289)	
Boy/girl friend	182 (63.0)
Family member	23 (8.0)
Stranger	46 (15.9)
Teacher	38 (13.1)
Number of life time sexual partner(n=289)	
One partner	179(61.9)
Two to four	87 (30.1)
Five and above	23 (8.0)
Khat chewing	
Yes	256 (63.7)
No	146 (36.3)
Alcohol drinking	
Yes	152 (37.8)
No	250 (62.2)
Ever watched pornographic film	
Yes	238(59.2)
No	164 (41.8)
Have sexually experienced peers	
Yes	246(61.2)
No	156 (38.8)
Used contraceptives(n=289)	
Yes	205(70.9)
No	84 (29.1)

In this study, around one third of the respondents, 84 (29.1%), who claimed to have premarital sex were not using any form of contraceptives. Only 123 (42.6%) of respondents who practiced premarital sex or 123(60%) of all those who used contraceptive were used condom during their last sexual intercourse (Figure; 1).

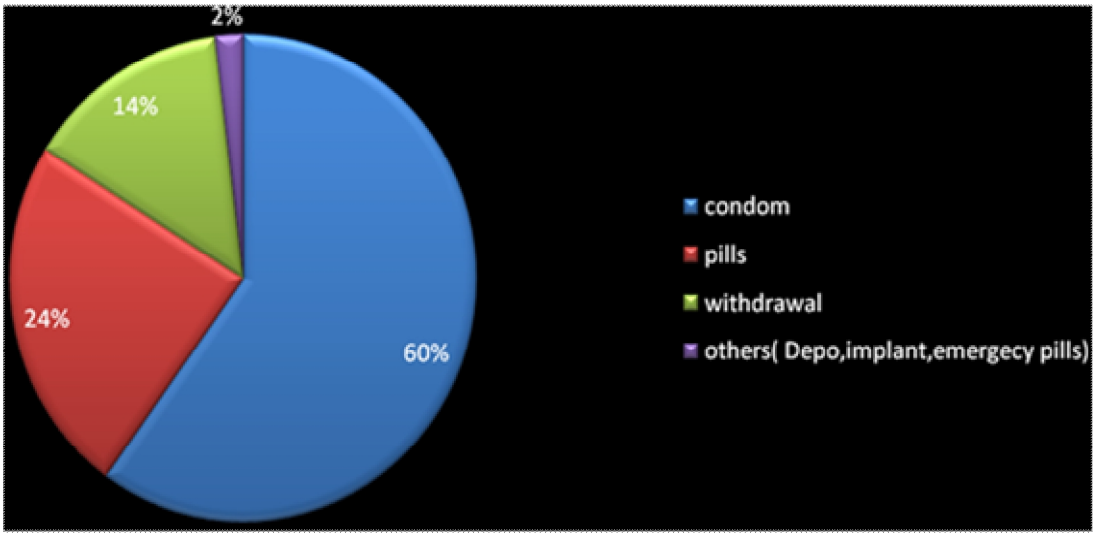

Fig 1: Methods of contraceptive used at last sexual intercourse among out of school youths in Yaballo town, August, 2012.

3.3 Factors associated with premarital sex

In bivariate analysis, being male, being employed, chewing Khat, drinking alcohol, watching pornographic film, and having sexually experienced peer were found to have significant association with premarital sex.

In this study, males were 2 times (COR= 1.97, 95%CI= 1.19, 3.24) more likely to practice premarital sex than female. Employed youth were 6.5 times (COR= 6.48, CI= 2.42, 17.36) more likely to have premarital sex than those who are supported by relatives.

Regarding substance use, those youths who chew khat, and drink alcohol were 2.3 times (AOR=2.29, 95%CI= 1.47, 3.57) and 2.2 times (AOR= 2.15, 95%CI=1.33, 3.48) respectively more likely to practiced premarital sex than who don't chew or drink. In addition, those youth who were exposed to pornographic film were 1.9 times (COR= 1.92, 95% CI=1.23, 2.97) more likely to practice Premarital sex than who were not exposed. Finally, those youths who have sexually experienced peers were 2.4 times (COR=2.4, 95% CI=1.54, 3.73) more likely to practiced premarital sex than those who don't have such peers.

In multivariate analysis being male, being employed, and having sexually experienced peers were found to be the predictors of premarital sex.

In this study, males were 3.2 times (AOR= 3.20, 95%CI=1.76, 5.82) more likely to practice premarital sex than female. Those youth who were employed were 6.9 times (AOR= 6.9, 95%CI= 2.40, 19.84) more likely to practice premarital sex than who were financially supported by relatives. In addition, those youth who have sexually experienced peers were 2 times (AOR= 1.96, 95%CI, 1.13, 3. 42) more likely to have premarital sex than those who have never experienced peers (Table: 3).

Table 3: Bivariate and multivariate analysis of factors associated with premarital sex among out school youths (N=402) in Yaballo town, August, 2012.

Variable	Premarital sex		Crude Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Adjusted Odds Ratio (95% CI)
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)		
Sex				
Female	182 (67.7)	87 (32.3)	1	
Male	107(80.5)	26(19.5)	1.97 (1.19, 3.24)	**3.20 (1.76, 5.82)***
Source of Pocket money				
Employed	159 (92.4)	13(7.6)	6.48(2.42, 17.36)	**6.9 (2.40, 19.84)***
Parent	113(55.4)	91(44.6)	0.66(0.28, 1.54)	0.67(0.27, 1.69)
Relative	17(65.4)	9(34.6)	1	
Chew Khat				
Yes	200(78.1)	56 (21.9)	2.29(1.47, 3.57)	1.75 (0.98, 3.13)
No	89(61.0)	57(39.0)	1	
Drink Alcohol				
Yes	123(80.9)	29 (19.1)	2.15(1.33, 3.48)	1.38(0.77, 2.47)
No	166 (66.4)	84(33.6)	1	
Watch pornographic film				
Yes	184(77.3)	54(22.7)	1.92(1.23, 2.97)	1.35(0.78, 2.34)
No	105(64)	59(36)	1	
Have sexually experienced friend				
Yes	194 (78.9)	52(21.1)	2.4(1.54, 3.73)	**1.96(1.13, 3.42)***
No	95(60.9)	61(39.1)	1	

* Significant at p-value of £ 0.05.

4. Discussion

Youth are in a state of rapid physical and psychological change. They have curiosity, enthusiasm and urge to experience new phenomena. As a result, they are more likely to be exposed to serious problems that include unsafe/unprotected sexual practice, early sexual debut, early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and various venereal diseases and most importantly to HIV/AIDS pandemic [2].

In this study the prevalence of premarital sex was found to be 289 (71.9%). This finding was somewhat similar with other out school study from Ethiopia, Bahirdar, (64.8%) [8]. But, higher than that of EDHS report of 2011 (9%), study from Eastern Ethiopia (24.8%), and study from wollega (21.5%). [5, 9, 10]. This high prevalence of premarital sex might be due to the fact that this study was conducted only on out of school youth with relatively more relaxed to be socialized with many people. This high risk of premarital sex among out school was also evidenced by another article [6].

This finding was also higher than that of study from Cameroon (42%), Nigeria (20%), north Nigeria (10.1%), Hainan province of china, (14.7%), study from Shanghai (41.5%), Hong Kong (18%), India (32.85) and in Vientiane, Lao PDR (44.7%) [11-18]. This might be due to the cross-cultural difference in accepting premarital sex.

The study showed that being male, being employed and having sexually experienced peers as independent predictors of premarital sexual practice.

In this study being male were 3.2 times more likely to have premarital sex than female. This finding was in agreement with Ethiopian studies [8-10]. This might be due to females were more concerned to keep their virginity till marriage due to cultural norms which can be supported by other study from Ethiopia [19]. In addition male might openly talk about sexual experience than female.

Being employed was also 6.9 times more likely to practice premarital sex. Similar finding were reported from an Eastern Ethiopian study [9], which showed the increments in risk of practicing premarital sex as pocket money of the youth

increases. This might be due to the fact that working youth can generate enough money so that they can offer different invitations for the opposite sex and exploit them for sex. In addition, youth who can generate their income can have the capacity to pay for sex.

In this study, having friends who experienced premarital sex was 2 times more likely to practice premarital sex than those who don't have such friends. This finding was in line with study from China and Nepal [17, 20]. This might be due to the influence from those who were engaged in premarital sex as evidenced by many researches [17, 18, 21].

Limitations: Social desirability bias might be introduced, as the information asked were sensitive. This may under-estimate the true prevalence of premarital sex. It is also difficult to establish a temporal relationship as the study design was cross-sectional. Despite these limitations, the findings from this study will contribute to the understanding of the factors associated with premarital sex in the study area.

5. Conclusions

Prevalence of premarital sex among out-school youth was found to be high. Being male, being employed and having sexually experienced peers were significantly associated with premarital sex. Rising awareness of youth on the consequence of premarital sex by providing gender balanced information, and encouraging youth to select right friends (peer) were recommended in order to reduce the proportion of youth practicing premarital sex.

6. Lists of abbreviations used

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
EDHS – Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey
HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
WHO – World Health Organization

7. Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

8. Authors' contributions

AS designed the study, performed the statistical analysis and drafted the manuscript. **AM** participated in the study design, implementation of the study, and contributed to the draft manuscript. All authors contributed to the data analysis, read and approved the final manuscript.

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