

ABSTRACT

Knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents in a rural community with regard to the distribution of contraceptives to sexually active children under 16 years.

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Parents play a vital role in the lives of their children because they transmit and interpret acceptable cultural behaviour and help to mold the personality of their children.

The study was designed to assess knowledge, attitude and practices of parents with regard to early sexual debut and distribution of contraceptives to sexually active children under 16 years.

It was carried out on 75 parents in a rural district in Westmoreland. Two streets in the district were randomly selected and all parents with children aged 10 - 15 years were interviewed.

Personal interviews were conducted by the researcher using pre-coded questionnaires.

The result showed that while the majority of parents were knowledgeable about sexual activities in children, less than half knew about sexual activities in their children. They strongly disliked the practice of early sexual activities in children. Parental consent for contraceptive was not the preferred practice as the majority of parents expressed that they would not give consent for their children to access contraceptives but it must be made available so that children can access it when all else fail. Parents prefer to talk to and to counsel their sexually active children instead of offering contraceptives. The majority indicated that they are fulfilling their role as sexuality educators for their children.