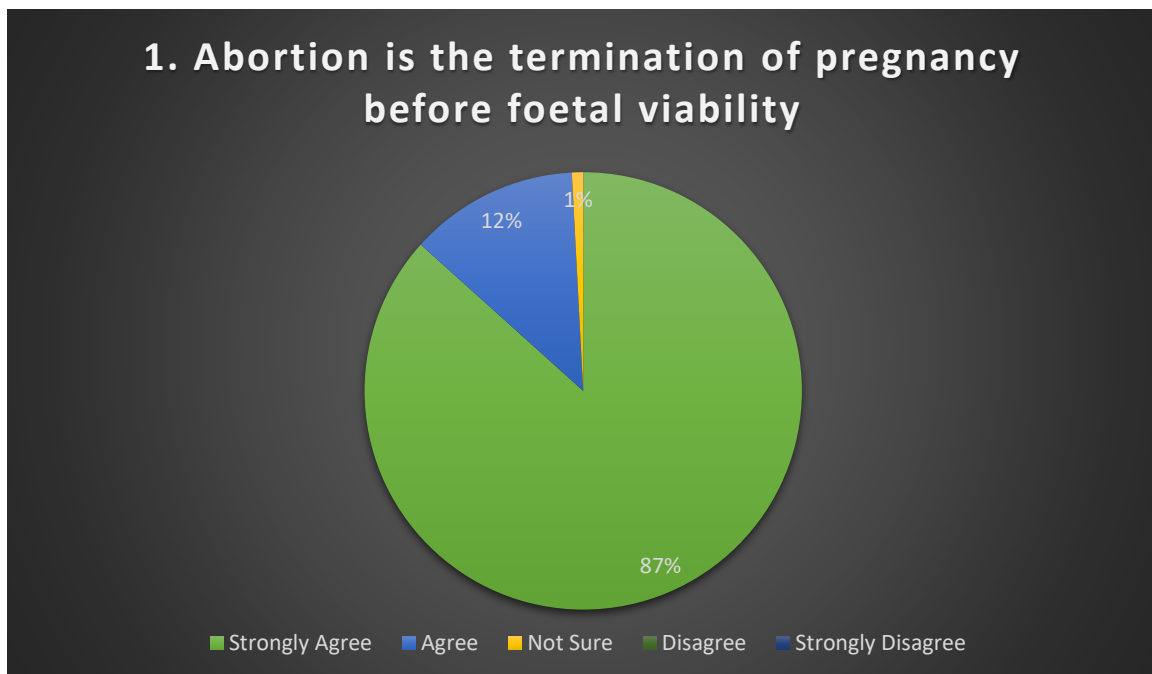


INTEGRATING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINED EFFORTS TO EMPOWER NIGERIAN GIRLS (Project INSPIRE)

Many women in Nigeria seeking medical abortion still find it difficult with the country having one of the most restrictive abortion laws among countries that restrict abortion. In Nigeria, abortion is legally restricted and is only allowed if the life of the pregnant person is at stake. The abortion laws in Nigeria have a Criminal Code (for the Southern States) and a Penal Code (for the Northern States). The provisions of the Criminal Code can be found in sections 228, 229 and 230 while that of the Penal Code can be found in sections 232, 233 and 234 of the Nigerian Constitution. However, controversy lies around these laws because some Nigerians take the legal restriction on abortion to mean that abortion is illegal in the country. Religious and cultural beliefs in Nigeria also have a bias towards abortion as a health care option or service.

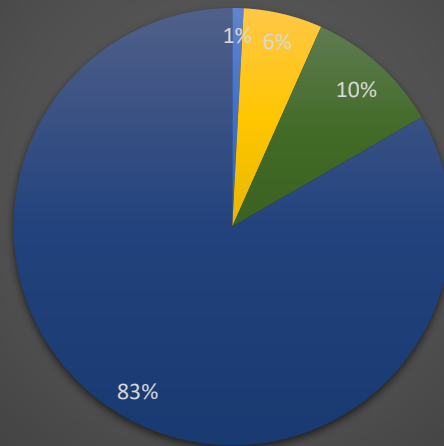
Abortion related deaths are seen to be more frequent in countries with more restrictive abortion laws (34 deaths per 100,000 childbirths) than in countries with less restrictive laws (1 or fewer per 100,000 childbirths) – *WHO 2019: Preventing Unsafe Abortion*. Since abortion has a legal restriction in Nigeria, women and young girls in Nigeria resort to unsafe abortion practices and that has led to high rates of maternal deaths in the country. An estimated 610,000 induced abortions occur annually and account for about 40% of maternal deaths in Nigeria (*Pan African Journal of Medicine, 2017: Akpanekpo & Umoessien. Unsafe Abortion and Maternal Mortality in Nigeria: A Review*).

The purpose of this research by YNCSD was to expand on the understanding of unsafe abortion and its consequences and the need to create access to safe abortion services by young people resident in Lagos State as an area of focus. A questionnaire that speaks to the research purpose was distributed among 120 respondents. Below is an analysis of the responses:



1. A significant number of the respondents **STRONGLY AGREED** to this definition of abortion. The fraction of the respondents who only **AGREED** revealed that they probably would not have defined the topic this way but were happy to embrace this definition.

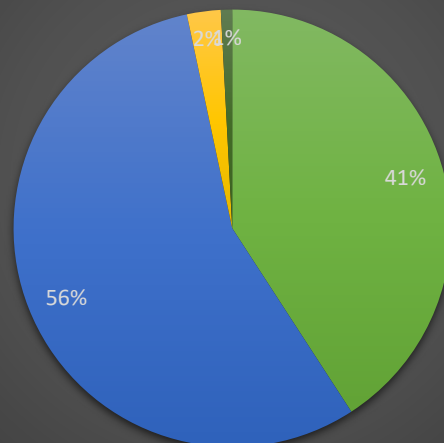
2. Abortion is murder and should be criminalised



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

2. A significant number of the respondents also disagreed to abortion being equated to murder but most of them shared that the restriction on it was necessary to regulate “unnecessary” pregnancy terminations.

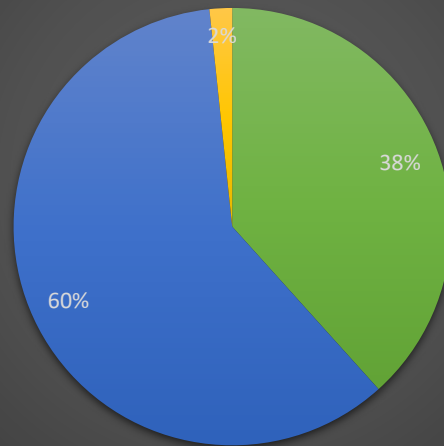
3. About 10% of the total deaths in Nigeria are a result of unsafe abortion



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

3. The few respondents who did not agree with this shared that they are not sure of the statistics but reckon that unsafe abortions have caused many deaths in Nigeria.

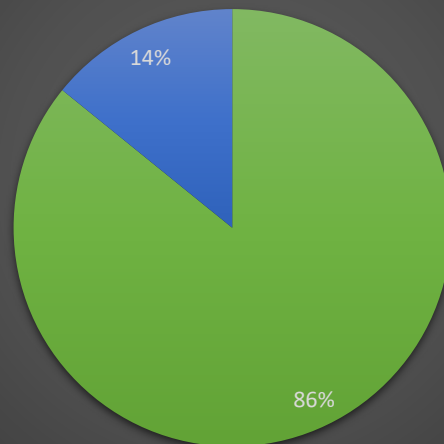
4. Many women/girls die and have severe complications as a result of unsafe abortion



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

4. A significant number of the respondents agreed to the severe consequences of unsafe abortion in the society.

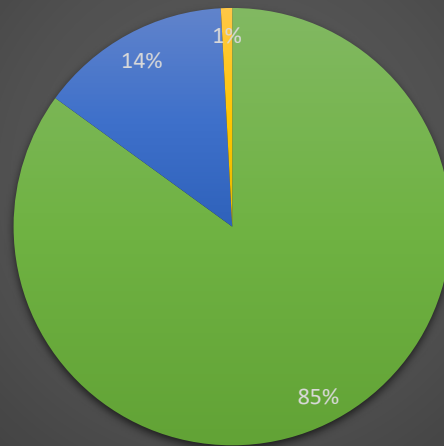
5. Do you think there are cases that would require a pregnancy to be terminated?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

5. All the respondents agree that even though there is a restriction on abortion, there are cases that would inevitably need an abortion.

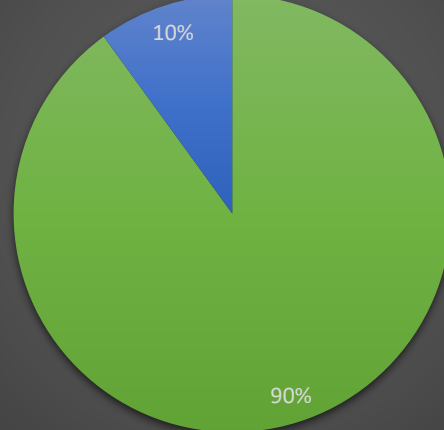
6. Do you think women gatherings and social clubs should discuss unsafe abortion and its consequences from time to time?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

6. From the responses, most of the respondents agreed that this is a good medium to create awareness on unsafe abortion and its consequences and the need to create access to safe abortion services.

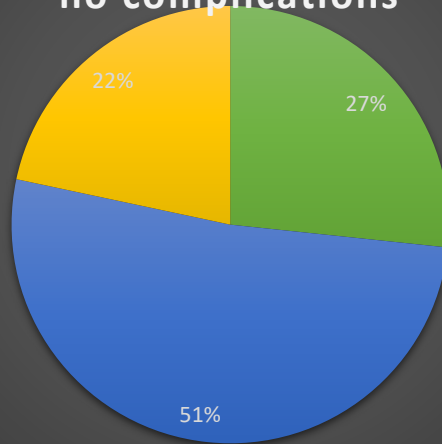
7. Do you agree that adolescent and young girls face the most consequences of unsafe abortion?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

7. Most of the respondents agreed in the affirmative. This further explains why adolescents and young girls should be equipped with adequate information on sexual and reproductive health and rights to guide their actions and choices.

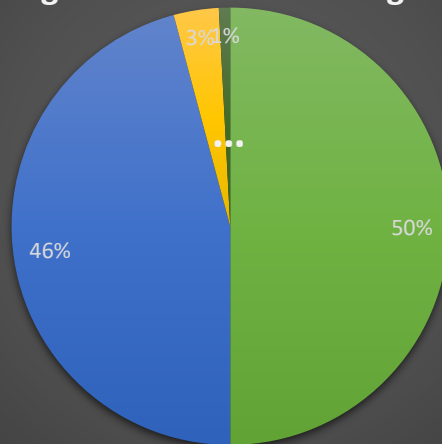
8. Women and girls should be allowed to procure abortion as long as it is safe and has no complications



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

8. Only a small fraction of the respondents were not sure if this will encourage promiscuity. However, most of the respondents agreed with the statement. This shows that some of the bias towards abortion are hinged on the unsafety of the procedures and the severe consequences.

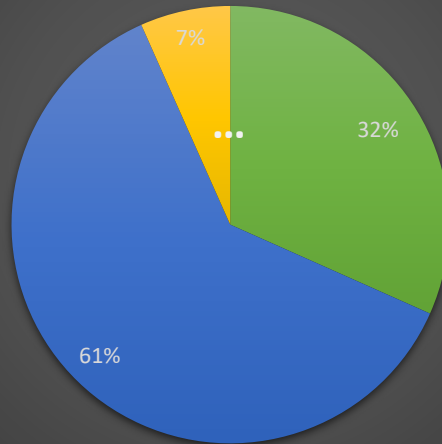
9. Do you think the unsafe procedures many people use for abortion has anything to do with it being criminalized in Nigeria?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

9. Almost all the respondents agree that the bias of Nigerian law towards abortion is hinged on the fact that it is usually unsafe and has severe consequences on women and girls.

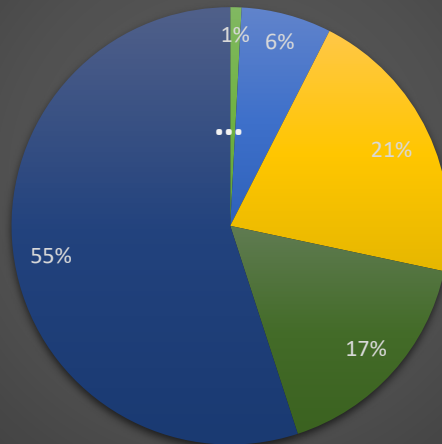
10. Do you think there are qualified doctors/physicians in Nigeria who can provide safe abortion services for women/girls?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

10. The respondents agree that there are qualified doctors who can provide safe abortion services if the restriction on abortion is removed.

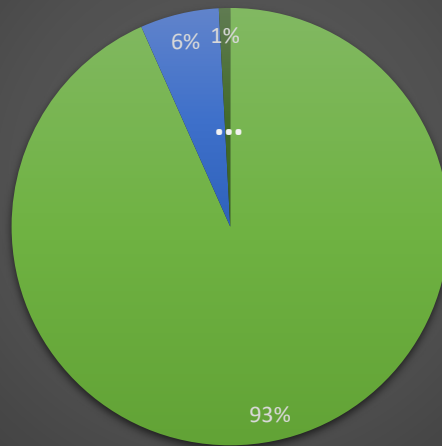
11. Do you think there are enough health facilities with access to safe abortion services in your community and state at large?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

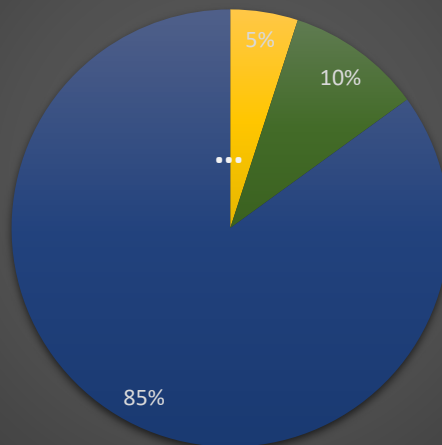
11. A significant number of the respondents **STRONGLY DISAGREED** to this. For safe abortion to be provided, there has to be enough facilities that can render the services.

12. Do you know anyone who has been harmed as a result of an abortion?



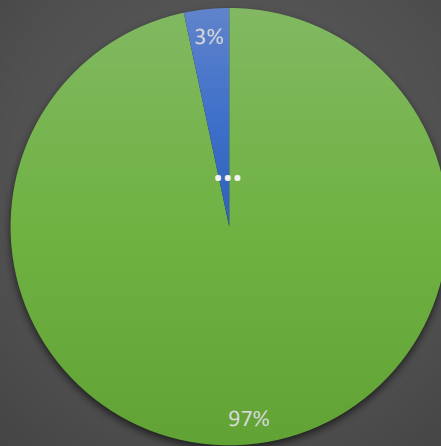
12. 99% all the respondents know at least one or more persons who has been harmed as a result of an abortion.

13. Do you think the person in Q12 procured safe abortion?



13. From the results, the respondents do not agree that the person(s) who they know was/were harmed from an abortion procured safe abortion.

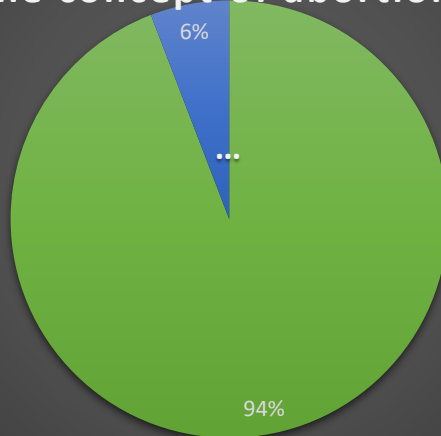
14. Do you think death from unsafe abortions will reduce if abortion is decriminalized and safe abortion services are made available?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

14. All the respondents agree that unsafe abortions and its consequences will reduce if abortion is decriminalized and if safe abortion services are made available and accessible in Nigeria.

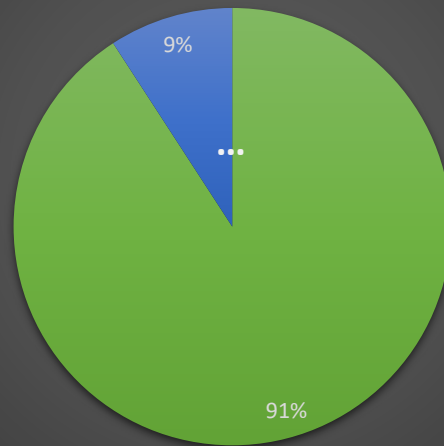
15. Do you think it is okay for an adolescent girl to ask her class teacher questions on the concept of abortion?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

15. All the respondents agreed and encourage this.

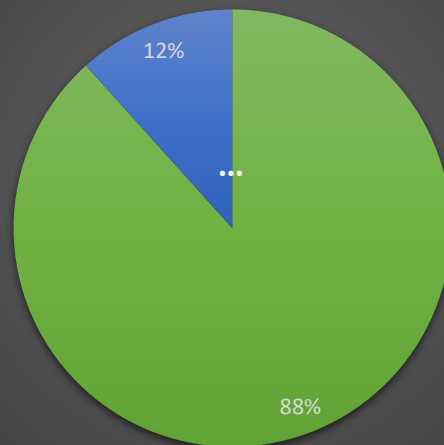
16. Comprehensive Sex Education in secondary schools can enlighten our young girls on unsafe abortion and its consequences and thereby reduce it



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

16. All the respondents here agree that CSE would be a great tool to protect adolescent and young girls from unsafe abortion and its consequences.

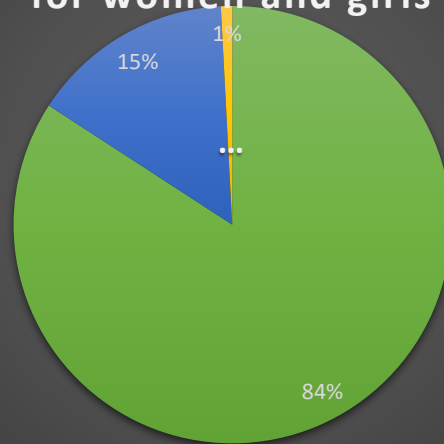
17. It is important for government, media and health agencies to advocate for safe abortion for women and girls



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

17. All the respondents agree that government, media and health agencies have a role to play in creating access to safe abortion services in Lagos and Nigeria at large.

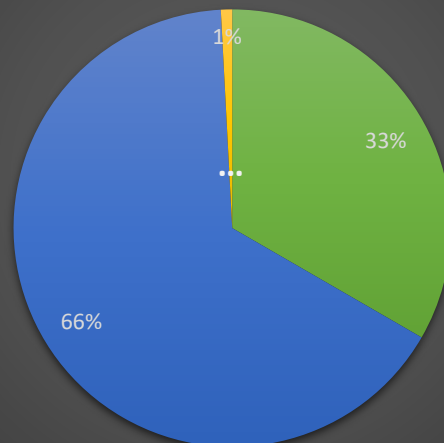
18. Government policies/laws should be reviewed to allow access to safe abortion for women and girls



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

18. The respondents also agree that one of the barriers to safe abortion services is the legal restriction on abortion in Nigeria.

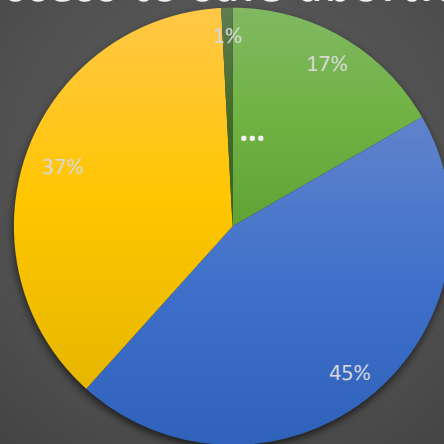
19. Can you have a discussion on abortion with members of your family and closed groups?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

19. Almost all the respondents shared that they have no problems with having a discussion on abortion with family members.

20. Are you willing to advocate for access to safe abortion?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

20. More of the respondents agreed to be advocates for access to safe abortion. A significant fraction were not sure if they would want to advocate in any way for abortion.

CHALLENGES/LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

1. The research did not capture the age range and gender of the respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Efforts should be put in by government and other stakeholders to create access to safe abortion services. From the research, the safer the abortion is and without consequences, the greater the acceptance level of the people.
2. Safe abortion will not be possible if there aren't enough health centres with safe abortion facilities. More health centres should be equipped with safe abortion facilities.
3. Comprehensive Sexual Education should be a core part of schools' curriculum as the research has shown that it will be a great tool to prevent unsafe abortion and other SRHR issues among young girls and adolescents.
4. More evidence should be gathered from other states and regions in the country to make for a good advocacy statement to review policies that limit access to safe abortion services in the country. .