

Publication

Autonomy and Reproductive Rights of Married Ikwerre Women in Rivers State, Nigeria

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

ID 4211276

Author(s) Womehoma Princewill, Chitu; Jegede, Ayodele Samuel; Wangmo, Tenzin; Riecher-Rössler, Anita; Elger, Bernice Simone**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Princewill, Chitu](#) ; [Wangmo, Tenzin](#) ; [Riecher-Rössler, Anita](#) ; [Elger, Bernice Simone](#) ;**Year** 2017**Year: comment** 14.06.2017**Title** Autonomy and Reproductive Rights of Married Ikwerre Women in Rivers State, Nigeria**Journal** Journal of Bioethical Inquiry**Volume** 14**Number** 2**Pages / Article-Number** 205-215**Keywords** Autonomy; Culture; Ikwerre women; Marital setting; Nigeria; Reproductive rights**Mesh terms** Awareness; Culture; Developing Countries; Educational Status; Ethnic Groups; Family Characteristics, ethnology; Female; Humans; Male; Marriage, ethnology; Nigeria; Rape; Reproductive Rights; Rivers; Sexual Behavior, ethnology; Social Values; Women's Rights

Abstract A woman's lack of or limited reproductive autonomy could lead to adverse health effects, feeling of being inferior, and above all being unable to adequately care for her children. Little is known about the reproductive autonomy of married Ikwerre women of Rivers State, Nigeria. This study demonstrates how Ikwerre women understand the terms autonomy and reproductive rights and what affects the exercise of these rights. An exploratory research design was employed for this study. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to conduct thirty-four in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions with purposively sampled educated, semi-educated, and uneducated Ikwerre women in monogamous or polygynous marriages. The collected data was analysed qualitatively with MAXQDA 11 using open and axial coding. The interviews and focus group responses reveal a low level of awareness of autonomy and reproductive rights amongst the Ikwerre women in Nigeria. While some educated women were aware of their reproductive rights, cultural practices were reported to limit the exercise of these rights. Participants reported that Ikwerre culture is a patriarchal one where married women are expected to submit and obey their husbands in all matters; and a good married woman according to Ikwerre standard is one who complies with this culture. Women's refusal of sexual advances from their husbands is described as not being acceptable in this culture; and hence rape in marriage is not recognized in Ikwerre culture. Education and awareness creation on the importance of women's reproductive autonomy could improve their reproductive rights and autonomy in marital settings. Overcoming the patriarchal aspects of Ikwerre culture-for example, the greater value placed on male children than female children and treating women as incompetent individuals-is necessary to promote gender equality as well as help improve women's reproductive autonomy.

Publisher Springer**ISSN/ISBN** 1176-7529 ; 1872-4353**edoc-URL** <http://edoc.unibas.ch/58939/>**Full Text on edoc** No;**Digital Object Identifier DOI** 10.1007/s11673-017-9779-8

PubMed ID <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28247201>

ISI-Number WOS:000406358800008

Document type (ISI) Article