# Marital closeness and the likelihood of extramarital sex: a comparative analysis of Lagos and Freetown

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## Abstract

**The relationship between inter-spousal intimacy and the tendency to suspect partners of sexual infidelity is analysed using data from Lagos and Freetown. The relationship between the practice of extramarital sex and the same set of intimacy variables is also analysed. The particular circumstances of the two cities may have affected the relevance of the intimacy variables in explaining the variations in the incidence of extramarital sex.**

Different patterns are emerging in the epidemicity of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and its disastrous consequences among sub-Saharan African populations. The need to curb its influence has stimulated research interest in the area of sexual networking. One reason for sexual networking analysis was to discover correlates of sexual behaviour, especially those that tend to increase the vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS. Research has been directed to some parameters of sexual activities of both unmarried and married groups within a given population.

In an effort to isolate influences on extramarital sexual activity, Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) identified spousal closeness as a significant variable. A similar factor was examined by Adegbola, Babatola and Oni (1995b) in their study of Freetown. While the former found spousal closeness negatively related to the likelihood of extramarital sex , Adegbola *et al.* did not find it significant.

The apparent disagreement on the relevance of intimacy between married couples suggests the need for further analysis of this factor, especially in a comparative setting. In both studies the intimacy factors were composite variables computed from some other variables.

A disaggregated analysis of the various components of the intimacy variable may help in designing practical programs for a reduction in the incidence of extramarital sex, thus limiting the likelihood of STD. This paper examines the phenomenon of marital closeness and fidelity, with respect to extramarital sex in Lagos and Freetown.

## Theoretical basis

Extramarital sexual activity has been explained by cultural, economic and psychological factors. In spite of the multiplicity of such explanations, it is generally believed that marital disharmony can either encourage or be the consequence of sexual unfaithfulness. Where the marital relationship is less than intimate, a dissatisfied and suspicious partner may be tempted into an extramarital sexual relationship in retaliation against the offending partner. Whether or not an offended partner contracts an extramarital sexual relationship may depend on whether the suspicion of infidelity by the other partner has been confirmed, and perhaps on whether the marital disharmony also entails the denial of sexual relations.

If the theoretical relationship between marital disharmony and extramarital sex is reasonably substantiated, marital harmony may be reliably used as an instrument to reduce the extramarital component of risky sexual practices, thus reducing vulnerability to AIDS.

In the present study, marital disharmony is measured by the degree of closeness between a couple. Each of the variables which affects the degree of closeness between partners is examined to see how it associates with the likelihood of extramarital sex. It is assumed that differences in the psychological constitution of males and females may result in different reactions to similar problematical marital experiences. Thus, the intimacy variables are analysed, controlling for gender. The working hypothesis is that men are less likely than women to be influenced by the intimacy variables in their propensity for extramarital sex.

It is expected that the results of the analysis by sex will be useful in advancing our understanding of the particular attitudes of the two sexes to similar marital problems. The result should provide a basis for refining new or existing interventionist programs against high-risk sexual activities of married people.

## Method

The present study is part of a major research effort designed to assess the sexual networking pattern of both Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria, and Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. The fieldwork was conducted in Lagos and Freetown in 1990 at a time when doubts still existed about the status of AIDS in West Africa, especially with reference to its incurability (Adegbola, Babatola and Oni 1995b)

The questionnaire designed for the main study has several focuses: economic characteristics of respondents, marital history, family formation and fertility, sexual networking and epidemics, spouse characteristics and family life. For details of the methodological procedures for the fieldwork, as well as the rationale behind them, see Adegbola *et al*. (1995a,b).

## Lagos and Freetown: a comparison

Lagos and Freetown share some common features. Lagos is a cosmopolitan city with Western lifestyles comparable to those in any Western city. Civilization, as measured by the assimilation of the Western type of urban life in Nigeria, as well as by the weakness of the traditional family control, attains its greatest level in Lagos. Fashions and the latest lifestyle patterns also originate from Lagos and spread to other parts of the country.

Freetown is also a sophisticated city with an urban lifestyle. The diversity in the ethnic composition of Sierra Leone makes the city a melting-pot just as Lagos is the melting-pot for all ethnic groups in Nigeria. As demonstrated in Adegbola *et al*. (1995b), extramarital sex in Freetown is at a very high level, higher than that of Lagos. Statistical analysis shows that it was difficult for Freetown, unlike Lagos, to be modelled by any of the selected factors, an indication that extramarital sex was practised by all. However, just as in the Lagos analysis, intimacy as a factor of extramarital sex was examined for Freetown, aggregating all the relevant variables as a single factor. This procedure made it difficult to assess the importance of the individual variables.

The position in this paper, however, is based on the reasoning that a decomposed analysis of the intimacy variable should offer a better way of designing practical programs to reduce the incidence of high-risk sexual practice among the married populations.

For both cities, knowledge of the real levels of HIV infection as well as that of confirmed AIDS cases is vague, owing to the low level of willingness to submit to diagnosis. However, the governments of both countries (especially Nigeria) have, in recent times, been showing

much concern over the disturbing level of confirmed HIV and AIDS cases - arising from accidental diagnosis of AIDS in patients who had sought medication for different reasons – despite the low level of deliberate quest for diagnosis by the populace.

## Characteristics of the married population

The socio-economic characteristics of the sampled populations illustrated in Table 1 differ in many respects, despite the fact that the two cities are in the same region. For example, the categories of the occupational groups are dissimilar because of the differences in the occupational structure of the two populations. Since the two studies focus on the theme of sexual behaviour, the structure of the two population samples shows a large concentration within the active reproductive years. With the mean age of 40 years, the Lagos male sample is about four years older than that of Freetown. By contrast, the average of 35.4 and 34 years for the female populations of Lagos and Freetown respectively show a much closer average age between the two.

However, the modal ages for both the Lagos and Freetown male populations tend to converge. In both cases, the modal age cohorts consist of those within the 31-40 years age bracket of which Lagos has 47.1 per cent against 42.8 per cent for Freetown. On the other hand, the female population of Freetown has a bimodal pattern, comprising those below 30 years of age and those between 30 and 40 years of age, each of which has about 40.4 per cent of respondents. There is only one modal group among the Lagos female population: those below 30 years of age.

The pattern of the education variable shows that there are more Lagos people in the higher categories of education than Freetown people, except in the medium-education category. By contrast, larger percentages of the Freetown population are to be found in the 'no-education' category. For example, 12.1 per cent of Freetown married males have no education against 9.9 per cent of Lagos married males, while the percentage of the uneducated females in Freetown exceeds that of Lagos by over 14 percentage points.

The respondents in Lagos have a larger percentage of those with either a polytechnic or a university education than those in Freetown.[1] Among the Lagos males, the respondents with tertiary education constitute 38.7 per cent against 5.6 for Freetown while the proportion of such respondents among the females is 29.9 per cent for Lagos and 2 per cent for Freetown. Those with medium-level education[2] constitute the modal group in the Freetown sample, being 71 per cent of the males and 64.5 per cent of the females.

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[1] The reason for the large high-education group in Lagos has been explained elsewhere (see Adegbola *et al*. 1995a). Lagos is the chief receiver of most of the educated people from the largest part of the country. It has a competitive labour market which encourages new skill acquisition for occupational relevance and mobility. It also has opportunities for correspondence education and numerous degree and certificate-awarding institutions. The lower educational status of Freetown has been highlighted by Beckley (1991). For Sierra Leone as a whole, the level of illiteracy is very high, 96 per cent for women and 74 per cent for men. The rural-urban migration to Freetown accounts for the different educational structure of the city.

[2] Those with secondary education and other vocational training such as nurses and kindred occupations, with lower than University training.

**Table 1**
**Socio-economic characteristics of the married populations (Lagos and Freetown)**

| | LAGOS | | | | FREETOWN | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | | Females | | Males | | Females | |
| **Selected Characteristics** | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| **Age** (Mean) | 40 | | 35.4 | | | 36.3 | 34 | |
| Low to 30 | 29 | 20.4 | 50 | 39.7 | 43 | 40.2 | 40 | 40.4 |
| 31-40 | 67 | 47.1 | 47 | 37.3 | 40 | 42.8 | 40 | 40.4 |
| 41-50 | 29 | 20.4 | 16 | 12.7 | 15 | 16.1 | 13 | 31.1 |
| 51 + | 17 | 11.0 | 13 | 10.3 | 12 | 12.8 | 6 | 6.1 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| None | 14 | 9.9 | 4 | 3.1 | 13 | 12.1 | 17 | 17.2 |
| Low | 48 | 33.8 | 45 | 35.4 | 12 | 11.2 | 16 | 16.2 |
| Medium | 25 | 17.6 | 40 | 31.5 | 76 | 71 | 64 | 64.6 |
| High | 55 | 38.7 | 38 | 29.9 | 6 | 5.6 | 2 | 2.6 |
| **Occupation** | | | | | | | | |
| None | 1 | 0.7 | 5 | 3.9 | 4 | 3.7 | 9 | 9.1 |
| White collar | 62 | 43.7 | 58 | 45.7 | 32 | 29.9 | 33 | 33.3 |
| Skilled | - | - | - | - | 14 | 13.1 | 30 | 30.3 |
| Unskilled | 26 | 18.3 | 20 | 15.7 | 22 | 20.6 | 5 | 5.1 |
| Sales/Bus. | - | - | - | - | 15 | 14.0 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Blue collar | 42 | 29.6 | 22 | 17.3 | - | - | - | - |
| Others | 11 | 7.7 | 22 | 17.3 | 20 | 18.7 | 21 | 21.2 |
| **Religion** | | | | | | | | |
| Christians | | | | | 58 | 55.2 | 53 | 53.5 |
| Catholics | 52 | 36.6 | 42 | 33.1 | | | | |
| Protestants | 47 | 33.1 | 56 | 44.0 | | | | |
| Muslims | 35 | 24.6 | 27 | 21.3 | 47 | 44.8 | 45 | 45.5 |
| Trad/others | 8 | 5.6 | 2 | 1.6 | - | - | - | - |
| **Ethnicity** | | | | | | | | |
| Igbo | 41 | 28.9 | 28 | 22 | - | - | - | - |
| Yoruba | 66 | 46.5 | 67 | 52.8 | - | - | - | - |
| South/Minor | 21 | 14.8 | 21 | 16.5 | - | - | - | - |
| Others | 14 | 0.9 | 10 | 7.9 | 49 | 45.8 | 33 | 33.3 |
| Creole | - | - | - | - | 17 | 15.9 | 21 | 21.2 |
| Mende | - | - | - | - | 25 | 23.4 | 25 | 25.3 |
| Temne | - | - | - | - | 16 | 15.0 | 20 | 20.2 |

Source: Fieldwork surveys

The differences in the educational pattern are reflected in the occupational structure, especially in relative numbers of white-collar employees. Although both Lagos and Freetown show a tendency for a modal white-collar employment, the actual percentages for Lagos, 43.7 per cent for males and 45.7 per cent for females, show that white collar employees are more predominant in Lagos than in Freetown which has 29.9 per cent male and 33.3 per

cent female white-collar employees.

Blue-collar employment ranks next to white-collar in Lagos, with 29.6 per cent males and 17.3 per cent females. In Freetown, the sales-business category comes second for males (20.6%) but for females the skilled workers category is second (30.3%). The business group is also prominent among the Lagos population, being 18.3 per cent of the males and 15.7 per cent of the females. The percentage of unemployed is also higher in Freetown, especially among the women.

The Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, constitute the larger group in both Lagos and Freetown: about 70 per cent of males and 77 per cent of females are Christians. About a quarter of Lagos males and a fifth of the females are Muslims. The proportion of Freetown population who are Muslims is larger than that of Lagos. A minor percentage adhering to traditional religion is found in the Lagos group: 5.6 per cent of males and 1.6 per cent of females.

Although the ethnic composition of both cities is diverse, Lagos seems to have a larger representation of some dominant groups than Freetown. The Yoruba, who constitute the Lagos modal group, comprise 46.5 per cent of males and 52.8 per cent of females, in contrast to Freetown where a multi-ethnic group forms the modal group for males (45.8 %) and females (33.3%).

The percentage of the largest single ethnic group in Freetown is not as large as that of the Igbo, the second largest ethnic group in Lagos. The observed pattern of strong ethnic diversity in the population structure of Freetown may mean there is no strong cultural norm to control the people's sexual behaviour. The next section therefore analyses the data on extramarital sexual relationships in the two cities.

## Extramarital sexual relationships

Two parts of the analysis of extramarital sex are described in this section. The first examines the issue of fidelity or suspicion, and whether it is related to some selected parameters of closeness between spouses. The second aspect examines extramarital sexual activity in relation to these inter-spousal intimacy variables. The first analysis is based on the question whether a respondent suspects that his or her spouse engages in extramarital sex. Other questions which yielded the independent variables are: whether spouses maintain a joint account (SACC), whether they eat together (EAT), whether they sleep together in the same bed (BSLE) and whether they go out together (OUT).

The general response pattern shows that out of the 129 married men in the Lagos sample, 76 (58.9%) said they were in extramarital sexual relationships, compared with 17.4 per cent of the 109 married women. The comparative percentages in Freetown are higher. Of 101 married men, 77 (76.2%) were involved in extramarital sex, as were 64 (66.7%) of the 96 married women.

Table 2 illustrates the pattern of partner's suspicion. It shows the percentage variations in the way respondents were relating with their spouses on each of the selected independent variables. The analysis of variable SACC shows that 33.3 per cent of Lagos men who had a joint account with their wives suspected that their wives had had extramarital sex and 17.9 per cent of men were suspicious among the no-joint-account group. By contrast, a greater proportion of the Freetown males without joint accounts, 35 per cent, suspected their wives, compared to 31.6 per cent of those with joint accounts.

Among the Lagos women, the incidence of no-joint-account is associated with a higher level of spouse-suspicion than among their male counterparts. Thus 62.2 per cent of Lagos wives without a joint account suspected their husbands of infidelity, compared with 33.3 per cent with a joint account.

**Table 2**
**Spouse suspicion patterns (TSEMA) by intimacy variables[a] (Lagos and Freetown)**

| Sex | Location | Suspicion | (J/ACC) | | (J/ROOM) | | (J/EAT) | | (J/BSLE) | | (J/OUT) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Males | Lagos | Yes | 3 | 14 | 11 | 6 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | | | 33.3 | 17.9 | 17.2 | 26.1 | 16.9 | 27.3 | 16.7 | 25.9 | 15.1 | 26.5 |
| | | No | 6 | 64 | 53 | 17 | 54 | 16 | 50 | 20 | 45 | 25 |
| | | | 66.7 | 82.1 | 82.8 | 73.9 | 83.1 | 2.1 | 83.3 | 74.1 | 84.9 | 73.5 |
| | | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | |
| | Freetown | Yes | 6 | 28 | 17 | 17 | 30 | 4 | 31 | 3 | 18 | 16 |
| | | | 31.6 | 35.0 | 33.3 | 35.4 | 33.7 | 40.0 | 35.2 | 27.3 | 29.0 | 43.2 |
| | | No | 13 | 52 | 34 | 31 | 59 | 6 | 57 | 8 | 44 | 21 |
| | | | 68.4 | 65.0 | 66.7 | 64.6 | 66.3 | 60.2 | 64.8 | 72.7 | 71.0 | 56.8 |
| | | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | |
| Females | Lagos | Yes | 1 | 46 | 26 | 21 | 27 | 20 | 27 | 20 | 23 | 24 |
| | | | 33.3 | 62.2 | 49.1 | 87.5 | 51.9 | 80.0 | 51.9 | 80.0 | 46.9 | 85.7 |
| | | No | 2 | 28 | 27 | 3 | 25 | 5 | 25 | 5 | 26 | 4 |
| | | | 66.7 | 37.8 | 50.9 | 12.5 | 48.1 | 20.0 | 48.1 | 20.9 | 53.1 | 14.3 |
| | | | N/S | | Sig*** | | Sig** | | Sig | | Sig | |
| | Freetown | Yes | 10 | 64 | 29 | 45 | 62 | 12 | 62 | 12 | 39 | 35 |
| | | | 71.4 | 79.0 | 74.4 | 80.4 | 77.5 | 80.0 | 76.5 | 85.7 | 76.5 | 79.5 |
| | | No | 4 | 17 | 10 | 11 | 18 | 3 | 19 | 2 | 12 | 9 |
| | | | 28.6 | 21.0 | 25.6 | 19.6 | 22.5 | 20.0 | 23.5 | 14.3 | 23.5 | 20.5 |
| | | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | |

Significance levels: * p < .10;  ** p < .05; *** p < .005

[a] Response to the suspicion question is to be read vertically, while response to the intimacy variables are to be read horizontally.

b Sig. or N/S indicates whether the observed association is significant or not.

The relationship between joint account status (SACC) and spousal suspicion (TSEMA) did not show any statistical significance for any of the four population subgroups. A similar pattern of relationship is observable between TSEMA and variable EAT, except that the results appear significant statistically in respect of the Lagos females. The Freetown wives, by contrast, were not strongly differentiated in their suspicion pattern by their joint eating status.

Analysis of Lagos and Freetown husbands shows that 17.3 and 33.3 per cent respectively of those who eat with their wives were suspicious of them compared with 26.1 and 35.4 per cent of those who normally eat separately. Despite the larger percentages of suspicion among the 'separate-eaters', statistical analysis shows that the relationship of suspicion with the joint eating status is not strong enough to conclude that it is significant.

The last three variables, whether respondent sleeps in the same room as spouse, whether they normally sleep in the same bed and whether they usually go out together, repeat the pattern observed with the joint-eating factor. First, they show that those who responded 'yes' generally were less suspicious of their spouses than those who responded 'no' to a particular variable. Second, Lagos wives show more sensitivity to each of the independent variables (except SACC), so that the relationship between suspicion and each of the independent variables is statistically signficant. Finally, the tendency for the Freetown females to be highly suspicious of their spouses regardless of their response to the closeness variables is repeated for the remaining three variables.

It appears therefore that the pattern of suspicion is strongly associated statistically only with the intimacy variables among the Lagos wives. The next section examines a similar relationship between the practice of extramarital sex and the intimacy variables.

## Intimacy variables and extramarital sex

Table 3 shows the patterns of variation between extramarital sex and selected closeness variables. In this analysis, the variable TSEMA – that is, whether the respondent suspects the spouse or not – is treated as one of the independent variables to examine how each of them relates to the incidence of extramarital sex.

The emergent pattern shows a strong relationship between the suspicion variable (TSEMA) and the practice of extramarital sex. Among the Lagos husbands who suspected their partners, 88.2 per cent had extramarital sex; 57.1 per cent who did not suspect their wives had extramarital sex. Thus, the cross-analysis showed a significant statistical relationship between the two variables for Lagos husbands. The patttern changes with their Freetown counterparts. Although the percentage of extramarital sex is higher among the suspicious husbands, the difference in levels between them and the 'no-suspicion' husbands yielded insignificant statistical relationships between the two variables.

The significant relationship observed with the Lagos husbands was not observed among the wives. Nonetheless, a larger percentage of suspicious wives (25.6 %) had extramarital sex than the non-suspicious wives (13.3%). The Freetown wives exhibited the same pattern as the Lagos husbands.

Among these Sierra Leonean women, the proportion of 'spouse-suspecters' who had extramarital relationships was higher than among the unsuspecting ones by 29.5 percentage points. The pattern shows a chi-square value that is significant at over 95 per cent confidence level.

**Table 3**
**Extramarital sex by intimacy variables (Lagos & Freetown)**

| | (TSEMA) | | (J/SACC) | | (J/EAT) | | (RSLE) | | (BSLE) | | (J/OUT) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | INTIMACY VARIABLES | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Extra-m. sex | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| **Males** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lagos | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes - N | 15 | 40 | 10 | 65 | 44 | 31 | 49 | 26 | 44 | 31 | 44 | 31 |
| - % | 88.2 | 57.1 | 62.5 | 58.6 | 50.0 | 79.5 | 52.7 | 76.5 | 51.8 | 73.8 | 58.7 | 59.6 |
| No - N | 2 | 30 | 6 | 46 | 44 | 8 | 44 | 8 | 41 | 11 | 31 | 21 |
| - % | 11.8 | 42.9 | 37.5 | 41.4 | 50.0 | 20.5 | 47.3 | 23.5 | 48.2 | 26.2 | 41.3 | 40.4 |
| | S** | | N/Sb | | S** | | S** | | N/S | | N/S | |
| Freetown | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes - N | 28 | 48 | 14 | 63 | 42 | 35 | 75 | 5 | 70 | 7 | 49 | 28 |
| - % | 82.4 | 73.8 | 72.7 | 76.8 | 79.2 | 72.9 | 79.1 | 50.0 | 77.8 | 63.6 | 77.8 | 73.7 |
| No - N | 6 | 17 | 5 | 19 | 11 | 13 | 19 | 5 | 20 | 4 | 14 | 10 |
| - % | 17.6 | 26.2 | 26.3 | 23.2 | 20.8 | 27.1 | 70.9 | 50.0 | 22.2 | 36.4 | 22.2 | 26.3 |
| | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | S** | | N/S | | N/S | |
| **Females** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lagos | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes - N | 11 | 4 | - | 18 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 13 | 8 | 10 |
| - % | 25.6 | 13.3 | - | 18.2 | 12.5 | 12.0 | 9.9 | 29.7 | 6.9 | 36.1 | 11.6 | 25.6 |
| No - N | 32 | 26 | 9 | 81 | 63 | 27 | 64 | 26 | 67 | 23 | 61 | 29 |
| - % | 74.4 | 86.7 | 100 | 81.8 | 87.5 | 75.0 | 90.1 | 70.3 | 74.4 | 63.9 | 88.4 | 74.4 |
| | N/S | | N/Sc | | S* | | S** | | S** | | S* | |
| Freetown | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes - N | 53 | 8 | 10 | 54 | 26 | 38 | 54 | 10 | 54 | 10 | 35 | 29 |
| - % | 71.6 | 42 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 66.7 | 70.7 | 63.0 |
| No - N | 21 | 11 | 5 | 27 | 13 | 19 | 27 | 5 | 27 | 5 | 15 | 17 |
| - % | 28.4 | 57.9 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 30.0 | 37.0 |
| | S** | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | | N/S | |

Notes: Significance levels: *p<.10  **p<.05  ***p<.005.

The variable RSLE (sleeping in same room as spouse) appears to have a stronger association with extramarital sex. The assocation is significant both for Lagos and Freetown husbands as well as for Lagos wives. More of the Lagos men who do not sleep in the same room with their spouses had extramarital sex than those who sleep in the same room with their spouses. The difference is about 23.8 percentage points. In Freetown, the rate of extramarital sex of men who share the same room with their spouses is about 29.1 percentage points lower than among those who normally maintain separate rooms.

A similarly strong relationship can be observed between the two variables with respect to the married women in Lagos. Among them, 9.9 per cent of room-sharing wives had extramarital sex against 29.7 per cent of separate room users. For their Freetown counterparts, the pattern remains highly undifferentiated by the variable RSLE. Hence, the chi square result shows a significant relationship for Lagos and Freetown men as well as for the Lagos women.

Sleeping in the same bed as spouse (BSLE) produced the same strong relationship to extramarital sex, especially for Lagos respondents: 51.8 per cent of men who share a bed with their spouse had extramarital sex compared with 73.8 per cent of separate bed users. The

corresponding percentages among the Freetown men are 77.8 and 63.6 per cent of extramarital sex. Among the women, 6.9 per cent of extramarital sex occurred among the bed-sharers compared with 36.1 per cent among the non-bed sharers. The pattern of extramarital sex among the Freetown women, on the other hand, seems to reflect their undifferentiated behaviour on the four initial variables.

The last of the five variables, which examines the relationship between going out regularly with one's spouse and extramarital sex, shows that in both Lagos and Freetown, the variable does not seem to differentiate the pattern of extramarital sex. Ironically, a greater percentage of the Freetown husbands and wives, as well as Lagos men, who go out with their spouses, engage in extramarital sex than those who do not usually go out together. However, in Lagos, the incidence of extramarital sex among those who go out with their spouses is lower than in Freetown. In respect of the Lagos married women the results show some association at a significant level of between 5 and 10 per cent.

## Logistic regression modelling of the intimacy variables

The analysis in the previous section focused on the incidence of suspicion as a dependent variable against five independent variables analysed in turns in a bivariate pattern. Thereafter, the suspicion variable itself, and the initial five independent variables, were considered as prospective independent categorical variables, against the dependent factor of extramarital sex. In the first of the two analyses above, the suspicion variable showed a generally poor association with nearly all the independent variables, while in the second analysis, the incidence of extramarital sex seems to associate in varying degrees with nearly all the five variables, especially among the Lagos respondents.

Since the independent variables of decision making rarely act independently of one another, but are interactive, a multivariate logistic analysis of the data is explored.[3]

The analysis is carried out only on the Lagos data, as observation from the initial bivariate analysis shows that many of the variables did not differentiate the incidence of extramarital sex among the Freetown respondents, particularly the women.[4] The logistic regression which follows uses extramarital sex as the dependent variable while the others are independent.

Since all the variables except joint outings correlate with the incidence of extramarital sex, the objective is to discover the intimacy variables which, in combination, best model the occurrence of extramarital sex among the population. Each of the variables or factors was categorized by sex. Thus, there were four categories under each variable. The first are the married men who relate positively to their wives on a particular intimacy variable, while the second category consists of men who do not relate to their wives on such a variable. The third and fourth categories replicate these categories for the women.

Table 4 illustrates the output of forward stepwise logistic regression analysis which assesses the sex variables, of which eating together (SEXEAT) and sleeping together in the same bed (SEXBSLE) are the only two variables which perfectly model the occurrence of

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[3] Since neither the suspicion nor the extramarital sex variable had any strong relationship with the independent variables for the Freetown population, the logistic regression modelling is carried out only for Lagos, and in respect of the extramarital sex, which has a stronger relationship generally with the intimacy variables.

[4] This supports the initial findings of Adegbola *et al.* (1995a) that the incidence of extramarital sex in Freetown is very high and tends to defy any meaningful statistical analysis.

extramarital sex within the examined population. Some variables, such as the suspicion factor, which were equally significant in the bivariate analysis, did not feature in the final model. Its omission is not surprising as it is expected to correlate strongly with many of the other variables. If spouses have minimum interaction and fellowship, as in eating together, and sharing the same room and bed, a greater level of suspicion is expected between them than between couples who interrelate closely in these ways.

**Table 4**
Logistic regression of extramarital sex by intimacy variables

| Variables/Categories | Coefficients | Wald statis | Odds Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|
| SEXBSLE | | 5.594* | |
| **Men who share room with wives** | -0.206 | .1127 | 0.813 |
| Women who share rooms with husbands | -1.787 | 5.481** | .167 |
| Women who do not share rooms | 0 | 9.912 | 1 |
| SEXEAT | | | |
| Men who eat with wives | 0.480 | .418 | 1.617 |
| Men who do not eat with wives | 2.602 | 8.253*** | 13.490 |
| Women who eat with husbands | -.261 | .117 | .7703 |
| Women who do not eat with husbands | 0 | - | 1 |
| **Constant** | -.1840 | | |
| **Initial** | | | |
| -2 log likelihood | 171.70 | | |
| Df | 156 | | |
| **Final Model** | | | |
| -2 log likelihood | 165.83 | | |
| Df | 154 | | |
| **Model chi-square** | 53.5 | | |
| Df | 6 | | |

Level of significance: * $p<.10$ **$p< .05$ ***$p<..005$

Sharing the bedroom did not appear in the final model but sharing the bed did. Most couples who share a room are also likely to share a bed, thus there is a strong correlation between the two variables.

The joint-account factor was not included in the original regression model because of the need to avoid numerous redundant matrices and because even in the bivariate analysis its influence on the incidence of extramarital sex was not significant. This may relate to a possible ambivalent role which joint-account keeping may have in spousal intimacy. Disagreement over the management of joint-account funds may sometimes alienate married partners and engender suspicion rather than uniting the couple.

The analysis shows that both eating together and sleeping together are significant factors. However, eating together is significant at a probability lower than 10 per cent while sleeping together is significant at a probability under 5 per cent. The factor of bed-sharing is more discriminatory especially among its categories. Men who share a bed with their wives have a lower likelihood of extramarital sex than the reference category which is women who do not sleep in the same bed as their husbands. The former is about 80 per cent as likely as the reference category.

The category of men who do not share a bed with their partners dropped automatically from the analysis to eliminate redundancies in the matrices. Thus, only two groups were contrasted with the reference category. Women who share a bed with their husbands also are less likely to have extramarital sex than the reference category. They are only about 17 per cent as likely as the women who do not share a bed with their husbands.

The influence of the second factor, that is, whether the respondent eats with the spouse, differentiates the husbands from the wives. For example, women who eat with their husbands have less orientation to, as well as less likelihood of, extramarital sex than the wives who do not eat with their husbands. By contrast, men, irrespective of their joint-eating status, showed a more positive tendency for extramarital sex than women who do not eat with their husbands. This tendency shows that though the joint eating factor is relevant to intimacy, it is stronger for the women than for the men. Hence, men who eat with their wives exhibited about 60 per cent greater likelihood of having extramarital sex than women who do not eat with their husbands. By contrast, the husbands who do not eat with their wives were 13 times more likely to have extramarital partners than married women who do not eat with their husbands. Furthermore, wives who eat with their husbands were only about 70 per cent as likely to have extramarital sex as those who do not eat with their husbands.

## Conclusion

The analysis set out to decompose the composite variable of spousal intimacy as a factor of extramarital sex, using two data sets from the West African subregion, those of Lagos and Freetown. The emergent pattern has shown that the peculiar circumstances of the two locations may have influenced the relevance of the hypothesized variables in differentiating the incidence of extramarital sex. In Freetown, where socio-economic conditions favour unrestricted sexual behaviour, the relevance of the intimacy variables in restraining extramarital sex is very low.

The tendency of a Freetown spouse to suspect the partner of extramarital sex is very high, and is largely independent of the degree of closeness on any particular intimacy variable; whereas in Lagos, the degree of suspicion by the wives is strongly and statistically related to certain intimacy variables such as the pattern of joint-eating, joint-outings and room-sharing with the husbands.

Thirdly, statistical evidence has shown that the effect of closeness varies not only between locations but also between sexes. Some practices expected to affect inter-spousal closeness may indeed do otherwise. In Lagos, the joint-eating factor is particularly strong, but more so for wives than for husbands. On the other hand, sleeping together in the same bed tends to have a more uniform and similar effect on both the husbands and the wives.

The logistic modelling, on the other hand, shows the importance of joint-eating and bed-sharing as perfectly modelling the incidence of extramarital sex in Lagos, an indication that such factors may prove useful in devising practical programs to reduce the incidence of extramarital sex. However, this would apply only to Lagos. The situation in Freetown appears to be more difficult, especially with the married women, for whom only suspicion tends to suggest the incidence of extramarital sex.

A reduction of high-risk sexual behaviour among married people seems possible, if research can be devoted to the analysis of larger data sets than are covered in the present study, focusing on various aspects of spousal relationships. Such efforts would need to be continuous, to assess possible changes than may be occurring in sexual practices, especially those that could endanger the reproductive life of the larger population.

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