

*Perspective*

## The role of peer pressure on teenage pregnancy

Hecht Louise\*

Department of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel.

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### DESCRIPTION

Peer pressure has played a significant role in the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. Peer pressure on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy further highlights the social vulnerability of adolescent girls in Vhembe district. Adolescent girls' socialization patterns that rely on gangs and cliques have further exposed their vulnerability to the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. The peculiar social standard of these gangs included the use of expensive smartphones, wristwatches and other gadgets, usually beyond the reach of their parents.

Teenage pregnancy is an important public health problem in many developing countries, including Nigeria. It is established that the problems of unplanned pregnancy have irreparable consequences for the general development of some teenagers. The fact that the risks of low birth weight, preterm birth, anaemia, and preeclampsia are related to biological age calls for the prevention of teenage pregnancy among adolescents to minimize these risks that may occur at birth, even after controlling for risk factors such as inaccessibility and inaccessibility of health services.

Research has shown that the common risk factor for adolescent girls aged 13–19 is socioeconomic rather than biological. About 11% of all births to teenager's worldwide end in serious complications, especially among those aged 13–19. Researchers have estimated that in developing countries, about 21 million girls aged 15–19 become pregnant and that approximately 12 million of them face various complications during childbirth. In Nigeria alone, 47% of women who marry between the ages of 15 and 18 and have children under the age of 18 experience complications during childbirth. Thus, complications such as postpartum endometritis and systemic infections, which are common during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, are common causes of death among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years.

The problems of peer pressure, confusion, wealth and

experimentation, especially in sexual activity, as well as the desire to make quick money through the sale of unwanted new-borns are now constitute serious concerns in health care practice and should attract the attention of health professionals. Researchers condemn the practice of teenagers living together and giving birth to children who are then sold for money to desperate buyers. This practice is rapidly gaining popularity in many developing countries, including Nigeria. Most operators of motherless homes now encourage this by scouting and placing teenagers with unwanted/unplanned pregnancies in secluded areas until delivery, when the new-born babies are handed over to potential buyers for a token. This practice, which can predispose teenagers to sexually transmitted diseases, death, etc., should be prevented.

### Risk factors for teenage pregnancy

- Single parent households
- Single mothers' dating behaviours
- Lack of positive family interaction
- Lack of parental supervision
- Lack of positive parent-child communication
- Mother was a teen parent

### Effects of teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy remains one of the main factors of maternal and child mortality. Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth is the leading cause of death for girls aged 15–19 worldwide. Pregnant girls and teenagers also face other health risks and complications because of their immature bodies. Babies born to young mothers are also at greater risk.

Adolescent pregnancy can also have negative social and economic consequences for girls, their families and communities. Unmarried pregnant teens may face stigma or rejection from parents and peers, as well as threats of violence. Girls who become pregnant before the age of 18 are also more likely to experience violence in a marriage or partnership.

\*Corresponding author. Hecht Louise, E-mail: [louise.hecht@upol.il](mailto:louise.hecht@upol.il).