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Obstetric and neonatal outcome in teenage pregnancy-perspective from Oman

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Introduction: Adolescents between 15-19 years give birth to approximately 13 million children annually, over 90% of these occurring in low income countries. Teenage pregnancy has major social and financial implications. The young mothers are financially dependent, their school drop-out rate is high and the possibilities of further resumption of education usually remote. Teenagers face greater risks of pregnancy complications than their adult counterparts.

Conflicting results regarding maternal and neonatal outcomes are presented by several studies including an increased incidence of maternal and perinatal mortality, preterm birth, pre-eclampsia, cephalopelvic disproportion, low birth weight, anemia and increased risk of abortion related morbidity and mortality.

Objective: To evaluate the obstetric and perinatal outcome in teenage pregnant Omani girls at a tertiary care University hospital in Oman.

Material and Methods: A retrospective case control study was conducted at the Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, Muscat, between 2007 to 2011. All teenage mothers aged 13-19 years completed at delivery were the study group. The following 2 consecutive deliveries in the age group 20-30 years served as controls for each case. Data retrieved from the computerized hospital database and maternity register was analysed using statistical software package SPSS 17. $p < 0.05$ considered statistically significant. Maternal, fetal and neonatal outcomes were compared.

Results: The incidence of teenage pregnancies was 2.2%. 252 teenage mothers formed the study group and 504 mothers, the controls. There was a statistically significant increase in anemia, pre eclampsia, eclampsia, PPRM and low birth weight in the teenage group. In the control group, GDM & polyhydramnios was significantly increased.

Discussion: Teenage pregnancy is an important social and public health issue in developing countries and also in Oman. An increasing incidence in recent years could be attributed to early onset of puberty, early sexual activity in girls and relative lack of awareness of birth spacing. Adolescent marriage is still a common practice in some countries including Oman. Conflicting results regarding maternal and neonatal outcomes are presented by several studies performed around this issue. An increased incidence of maternal and perinatal mortality, preterm birth, pre-eclampsia, cephalopelvic disproportion, low birth weight and anemia have been reported by some authors. Adolescents are also at increased risk of abortion related morbidity and mortality due to unsafe abortion practices

Conclusion: Teenage pregnancy in Omani girls is associated with anemia, preeclampsia, low birth weight and PPRM. Creating public awareness and higher education of girls would optimize outcomes.

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