

Teen Pregnancy: Physical, Psychological and Social Aspects

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent pregnancy is global health problem not yet resolved in developing countries and some developed countries. The ignorance about sex education and reproduction among parents, adolescents and teachers increases the chances of copulatory relations and unwanted pregnancies. Socio-economic backgrounds, traditional gender roles, early marriage, peer pressure, isolation and rejection by parents are major factors contributing to teenage pregnancy. Teen pregnancy leads to major health risks both for mother and baby due to physiological and psychological immaturity. An online survey was conducted to analyze the thoughts of people from different places about the issues of teen pregnancy. In order to improve the quality of life of adolescents regarding teen pregnancy and its complication, provision must be made by creating awareness, implementing various policies and campaigns by government, non-judgmental approach from society and parental guidance.

Keywords: Parental care; Preeclampsia; Sex; Alcohol; Awareness; Education; Puberty; Pressure

INTRODUCTION

Teen pregnancy is not considered as threat in societies where adolescent girls are given to be married to older men by their parents. However, these girls have too early pregnancies resulting in damage to their sexual and internal organs.

Nordic countries and Netherlands since their healthcare system guarantees non-judgmental approach, confidentiality and support. Highest teen pregnancy rates are in USA and UK and lowest in Japan and South Korea. According to World Health Organization (WHO), complications during pregnancy and childbirth are major cause of death among girls of 15-19 years

The problems related to early pregnancy affect the emotions and ends up to adolescent somatization, with signs and symptoms that would be hazardous to a healthy pregnancy. The pregnancy risks are related, among others to psychological aspects and lack of family support, factors that may lead to high level of stress. In some families, teen pregnancy may be considered natural, when there is a stable union between the teenager and parents.

However, in other families, this event may come permeated with violence by parents of pregnant young women. A study on

domestic violence against pregnant teenagers states that the revelation of pregnancy led to conflicts and violence that manifests both in physical form - beating and psychological form - inducing an abortion [1].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Teenage pregnancies are associated with social issues, including lower educational levels and poverty. Teenage pregnancy in developed countries is usually outside of marriage and is often associated with a social stigma. Teenage pregnancy in developing countries often occurs within marriage and half are planned. However, in these societies, early pregnancy may combine with malnutrition and poor health care to cause medical problems.

When used in combination, educational interventions and access to birth control can reduce unintended teenage pregnancies. Teenage pregnancy (with conceptions normally involving girls between age 16 and 19), was far more normal in previous centuries, and common in developed countries in the 20th century. Among Norwegian women born in the early 1950s, nearly a quarter became teenage mothers by the early 1970s. However, the rates have steadily declined throughout the developed world since that 20th century peak.

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Maternal and prenatal health is of particular concern among teens who are pregnant or parenting. The worldwide incidence of premature birth and low birth weight is higher among adolescent mothers. In a rural hospital in West Bengal, teenage mothers between 15 and 19 years old were more likely to have anemia, preterm delivery, and a baby with a lower birth weight than mothers between 20 and 24 years old. Research indicates that pregnant teens are less likely to receive prenatal care, often seeking it in the third trimester, if at all.

The Guttmacher Institute reports that one-third of pregnant teens receive insufficient prenatal care and that their children are more likely to have health issues in childhood or be hospitalized than those born to older women. In the United States, teenage Latinas who become pregnant face barriers to receiving healthcare because they are the least insured group in the country [2].

Young mothers who are given high-quality maternity care have significantly healthier babies than those who do not. Many of the health-issues associated with teenage mothers appear to result from lack of access to adequate medical care. Many pregnant teens are at risk of nutritional deficiencies from poor eating habits common in adolescence, including attempts to lose weight through dieting, skipping meals, food faddism, snacking, and consumption of fast food. Inadequate nutrition during pregnancy is an even more marked problem among teenagers in developing countries. Complications of pregnancy result in the deaths of an estimated 70,000 teen girls in developing countries each year.

Young mothers and their babies are also at greater risk of contracting HIV. The World Health Organization estimates that the risk of death following pregnancy is twice as high for girls aged 15-19 than for women aged. The maternal mortality rate can be up to five times higher for girls aged 10-14 than for women aged. Illegal abortion also holds many risks for teenage girls in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa.

Risks for medical complications are greater for girls aged under 15, as an underdeveloped pelvis can lead to difficulties in childbirth. Obstructed labour is normally dealt with by caesarean section in industrialized nations; however, in developing regions where medical services might be unavailable, it can lead to eclampsia, obstetric fistula, infant mortality, or maternal death. For mothers who are older than fifteen, age in itself is not a risk factor, and poor outcomes are associated more with socioeconomic factors rather than with biology [3].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An online survey in the form of questionnaire was conducted among 24 people from places around world with the help of SurveyMonkey.com. This survey was based on following concerns: various factors contributing to teen pregnancy, awareness among the citizens about preventing adolescent pregnancies, rituals of early marriage, rate of people being familiar with sex education. With the delicacy of teen pregnancy. Teen mothers are at risk of developing preeclampsia, anemia, anxiety, shock and depression (Figure 1).

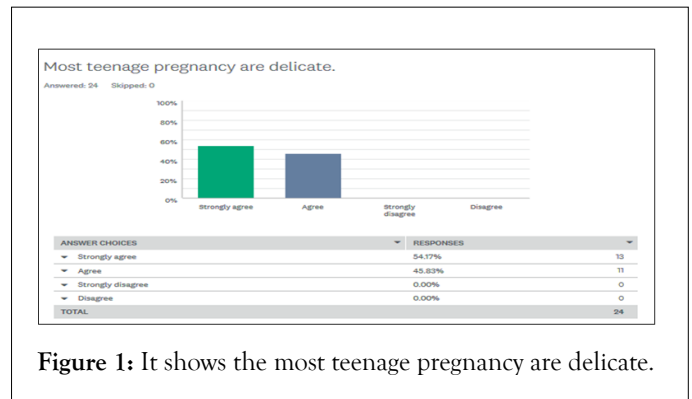


Figure 1: It shows the most teenage pregnancy are delicate.

Preeclampsia may harm kidneys, fatal for both mother and child. Their babies are more likely to be underweight due to premature birth, still births, cephalopelvic disproportion and to develop learning difficulties, diabetes and heart diseases (Figure 2).

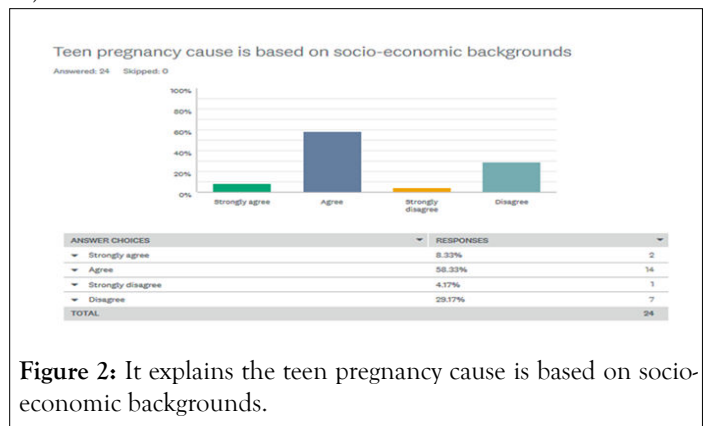


Figure 2: It explains the teen pregnancy cause is based on socio-economic backgrounds.

The 58.33% agreement regarding socioeconomic conditions, contributing to teen pregnancy has been achieved during the survey. Several factors such as low income, lack of education, unemployment can increase the chances of teen pregnancy (Figure 3).

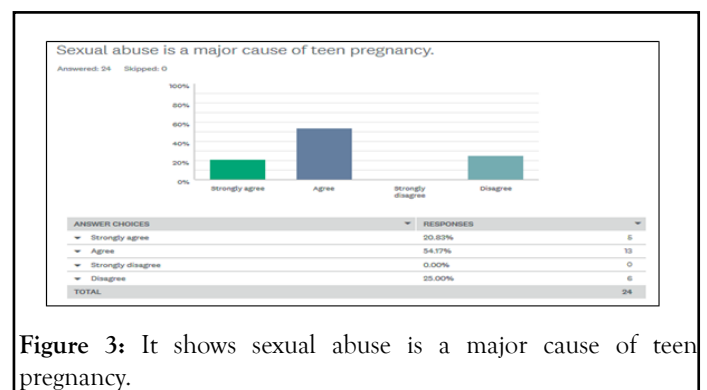


Figure 3: It shows sexual abuse is a major cause of teen pregnancy.

About 18 (13+5) out of 24 people agreed that sexual abuse leads to unwanted teen pregnancy. Some studies of adolescent mothers and pregnant adolescence have stated a high prevalence of sexual abuse, ranging from 43% to 62%. Among a sample of women who were sexually abused were at risk of acquiring HIV infection three times more than non-abused pregnant women [4]. A study on domestic violence against pregnant teenagers states that revelation of pregnancy leads to conflicts and

violence both in physical (beating) and psychological (inducting an abortion) form (Figure 4).

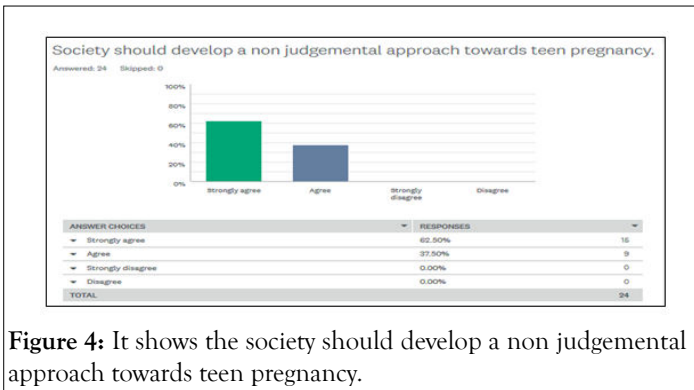


Figure 4: It shows the society should develop a non judgemental approach towards teen pregnancy.

Based on the survey, 62.50% of people strongly agree with the need to change the attitude of society. Developing a positive support and non-judgmental approach towards pregnant teenagers would help the young mothers both psychologically and physically [5]. A helping hand from the society may result in shaping better future both for teen mothers and baby (Figure 5).

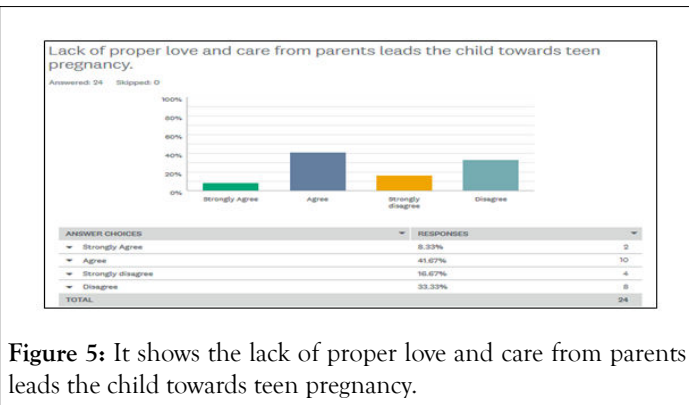


Figure 5: It shows the lack of proper love and care from parents leads the child towards teen pregnancy.

Among 24 people, 10 of them agree with factor-lack of parental love and care, leads to teen pregnancy. Feeling unbeloved due to too busy parents, a teen might readily accept the advances of a male hunting for ‘hoop up’ and end up being victim of unwanted teen pregnancy [6]. There should be a good relation between parents and teens as teenagers are often unable to manage the physical and mental changes they undergo during puberty (Figure 6).

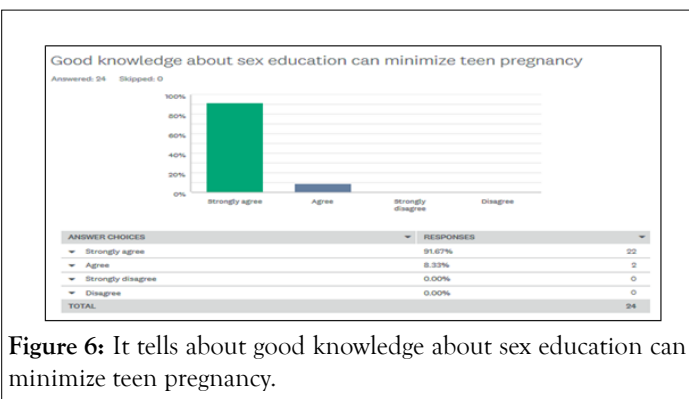


Figure 6: It tells about good knowledge about sex education can minimize teen pregnancy.

Maximum (91.67%) people agree that lack of knowledge and curiosity to know the ignored questions about sex is one of the factors promoting teen pregnancy. Children should be comfortable with their body parts and understand the

differences and similarities between boys and girls. Knowing this the child accepts his/her sexual parts as naturally as other body parts. Parents neglect to introduce their children to penis, nipples, vagina and testicles [7]. Dr. Alfred Kinsey, who pioneered books on sexual behaviors of adults in USA, related, in his autobiography, the sadistic ways his father treated his body when he found out about young Kinsey’s masturbation (Figure 7) [8].

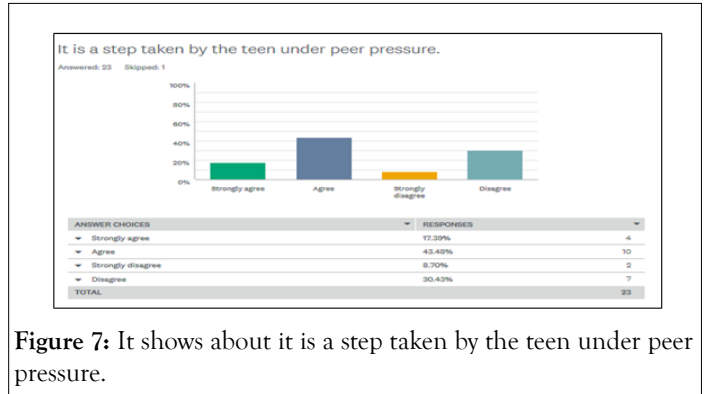


Figure 7: It shows about it is a step taken by the teen under peer pressure.

10 out of 24 people agree that teen under peer pressure may become a victim of unwanted pregnancy. Teen gives a peer to pressure her for unprotected sex. For e.g.: ‘Baby, show me that you love me’. Bullying of teens in schools over sexual orientation and coercions for sex. For e.g.: Blackmailing with fake nude pictures (Figure 8) [9].

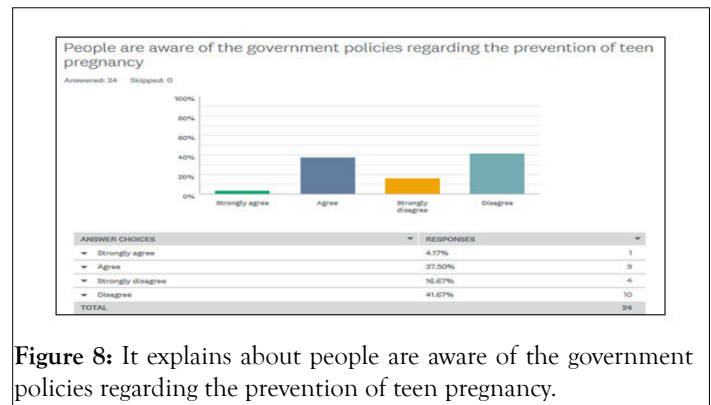


Figure 8: It explains about people are aware of the government policies regarding the prevention of teen pregnancy.

About half of the total people disagree with the above question. Various government policies and campaigns have been conducted, but the uneducated and people in underdeveloped or developing countries are unaware of them. The Kaiser Permanente Early Start program in California helps out women to stop substance abuse during pregnancy and estimates that such steps could save approx. \$2 billion annually [10].

CONCLUSION

To reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancy is a toilsome task. Teens undergone a lot of hormonal changes during puberty. These hormones affect their moods, emotions and impulses which changes their way of thinking about dating and sex. Teachers and parents should be supporting and answering to the questions arising in teens’ mind. Teens should be taught in schools about the reproductive system and the importance of

contraceptives. Parental guidance play an important role in shaping the attitude of teens, which help them to gain understanding about how to save themselves from peer pressure and bullying. Better level of communication between parents and teenagers reduces the fear in teens of revealing bad happenings. Teens should not be addicted to alcohol as, it damages the functioning of frontal lobes. 'Without mature frontal lobes, young people are less able to weigh negative consequences and inhibits impulsive behavior like binge drinking...binge drinking leads to unsafe sex and unwanted pregnancy'. Government of developing countries should make sure that every citizen should know about the policies made for their benefit. Government and private agencies should make efforts to provide baby nurturing, provision for jobs for teens, housing, educational continuation and psychological support for their future planning.

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