

75. STUDY ON SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AT A TERTIARY CARE SETTING

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OBJECTIVES

To assess the social factors affecting the teenage pregnancies at a tertiary care setting.

METHODS

A cross sectional descriptive study was carried out using a pretested interviewer administered questionnaire. All teenage pregnant mothers attending the antenatal clinic of the professorial unit at the De Soyza Hospital for Women were recruited. Study was conducted for a period of 18 months from December 2005. Ethical

clearance was obtained from the ethical review committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo. Results were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows version 15.

RESULTS

The mean age of the teenage pregnant mothers (n=242) participated in this study was 18.3 ± 1.04 years. Two of the teenage mothers have never gone to school while 11.2% (n=27) had only primary education; 48.3% (n=117) have studied only up to grade 6 to 10, 34.7% (n=84) have studied only up to ordinary Level, 5 % (n=12) studied up to Advanced Level, none have had tertiary education. At the time of the marriage 63.2% (n=153) of teenage mothers were unemployed and 19.8 % (n=48) worked as garment factory workers, while other 17.0% (n=41) did different other employments. After the marriage 68.5 % left their employment (n=61/89) while others continued. One of the parents has been lost in 22.7% (n=55) of teenage mothers. Parents have been separated in 9.0% (n=22) of teenage mothers while 28.0% (n=68) of teenage mothers were exposed to marital disharmony of the parents. Mothers of pregnant teenagers are employed abroad in 37.1% (n=90) while 8.7% (n=21) of them had their fathers working abroad. Sisters of 28.9% (n=70) of teenage mothers had teenage marriages and 15.2% (n=37) had sisters with teenage pregnancies.

Mean age of marriage among teenage girls was 17.56 ± 1.25 years. Majority (71.5%, n=173) of pregnant teenagers married following a love affair of which 48.6% (n=84) married without parents consent. Of the pregnant teenagers who had proposed marriages (26.4%, n=64), 9.4 % (n=6) had been married due to financial reasons while 87.5% (n=56) marriages were due to cultural reasons. Thirteen teenage mothers (5.4%) have not registered their marriage. Premarital sexual relations were reported by 24.4% (n=59) of participants. Following the marriages 68.2 % (n=131) of teenage girls conceived within 6 months and 6.2% (n=13) of pregnancies were diagnosed after 12 weeks of gestation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Parental deprivation due to death and foreign employment, marital disharmony and separation of parents are common among teenage pregnant mothers. Marriages and pregnancies among teenage sisters of this study population are also common. It is worth while considering social factors highlighted in this study when plans are made to reduce teenage pregnancies.