

The place of adolescent health, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health in the context of, and beyond the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals)

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**World Health
Organization**

1. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ✓
2. The place of adolescents & adolescent health within the MDGs
3. Progress in achieving the MDGs
4. The Global Strategy on Women's and Children's Health
5. Important health issues affecting adolescents, which are not addressed by the MDGs

The place of adolescents & adolescent health in the context of & beyond the MDGs



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Millennium Development Goals



Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger



Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education



Goal 3: Promote gender equality & empower women



Goal 4: Reduce child mortality



Goal 5: Improve maternal health



Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases



Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability



Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

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Addressing adolescents, especially adolescent girls, is key to achieving the MDGs

- There are 600 million adolescent girls in the developing world
- Achieving MDGs 1-6 (including reducing childhood mortality, maternal mortality & HIV) **requires concerted attention** to adolescent girls.

"...by virtue of gender & other social inequalities, many adolescent girls in developing countries are at risk from violence; forced early marriage; HIV/AIDS & other STIs; & especially among the poor, exclusion from schooling, fair employment, & good health care".



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Progress has been made in achieving the MDGs but this has been uneven and slow

*" Between now & 2015
we must make sure
that promises made
are promises kept.
The people of the
world are watching."*

- Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General, United Nations



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GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon



The relevance of adolescent pregnancy to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Adolescent pregnancy contributes to maternal mortality
- Adolescent pregnancy contributes to perinatal and infant mortality
- Adolescent pregnancy contributes to the vicious cycle of poverty.



Fact sheet

Why is giving special attention to adolescents important for achieving Millennium Development Goal 5?

The facts

Many adolescent girls between 15 and 19 get pregnant

- About 16 million women 15–19 years old give birth each year, about 11% of all births worldwide.
- Ninety-five per cent of these births occur in low- and middle-income countries. The average adolescent birth rate in middle-income countries is more than twice as high as that in high-income countries, with the rate in low-income countries being five times as high.
- The proportion of births that take place during adolescence is about 2% in China, 18% in Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 50% in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Half of all adolescent births occur in just seven countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and the United States.

Pregnancy among very young adolescents is a significant problem

- In low- and middle-income countries, almost 10% of girls become mothers by age 16 years, with the highest rates in sub-Saharan Africa and south-central and south-eastern Asia.
- The proportion of women who become pregnant before age 15 years varies enormously even within regions – in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the rate in Rwanda is 0.3% versus 12.2% in Mozambique.

The contexts of adolescent pregnancies are not always the same

- Having a child outside marriage is not uncommon in many countries. Latin America, the Caribbean, parts of sub-Saharan Africa and high-income countries have higher rates of adolescent pregnancy outside marriage than does Asia.

Adolescent pregnancy is dangerous for the mother

- Births to unmarried adolescent mothers are far more likely to be unintended and are more likely to end in induced abortion.
- Coerced sex, reported by 10% of girls who first had sex before age 15 years, contributes to unwanted adolescent pregnancies.

Adolescent pregnancy is dangerous for the child

- Although adolescents aged 10–19 years account for 11% of all births worldwide, they account for 23% of the overall burden of disease (disability-adjusted life years) due to pregnancy and childbirth.
- Fourteen percent of all unsafe abortions in low- and middle-income countries are among women aged 15–19 years. About 2.5 million adolescents have unsafe abortions every year, and adolescents are more seriously affected by complications than are older women.
- In Latin America, the risk of maternal death is four times higher among adolescents younger than 16 years than among women in their twenties.
- Many health problems are particularly associated with negative outcomes of pregnancy during adolescence. These include anaemia, malaria, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, postpartum haemorrhage and mental disorders, such as depression.
- Up to 65% of women with obstetric fistula develop this as adolescents, with dire consequences for their lives, physically and socially.

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- Stillbirths and death in the first week of life are 50% higher among babies born to mothers younger than 20 years than among babies born to mothers 20–29 years old.

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The relevance of adolescent pregnancy to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- Adolescent pregnancy contributes to maternal mortality
- Adolescent pregnancy contributes to the vicious cycle of poverty.

Addressing adolescent pregnancy is important for achieving the MDGs to reduce poverty, childhood mortality & maternal mortality



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Action to address adolescent pregnancy: 3 key elements

- Prevention of too early pregnancies – within or outside marriage.
- Prevention of unsafe abortions, and deaths due to abortions.
- Prevention of deaths during pregnancy and child birth.



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Births to unmarried adolescent mothers are far more likely to be unintended and are more likely to end in induced abortion.

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Action to address adolescent pregnancy: 3 key elements

- Prevention of too early pregnancies within or outside marriage.
- Prevention of deaths during pregnancy and child birth.

These actions should be closed linked with actions to prevent HIV.



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We also need to pay attention to the health problems not covered by the MDGs



Effects during adolescence...

- **Mental health conditions** represent the biggest burden of disease in young people. Depression is the most prevalent diagnosis, & is a significant risk factor for suicide.
- **Violence & injuries** affect adolescents more than any other age- group.
- **Sexual coercion & violence** against adolescents continues to be a problem which must be addressed.
- **Use of substances**, in particular alcohol use, leads to high levels of risk behaviours & a large burden of diseases.

Effects in the future...

- Health behaviours adopted during adolescence determine the risk for **non-communicable diseases later in life**.
 - The majority of **tobacco users** start consuming tobacco products in their youth. This leads in time to disease and premature death.
 - Levels of **overweight & obesity** in young people are increasing worldwide & will affect the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes.