

## Module 4: Adolescent pregnancy - Adolescent health and development with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health - Assignment

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### **Is adolescent pregnancy a public health problem in Ethiopia?**

Yes, the adolescent pregnancy is one of the public health problems in Ethiopia. As adolescents in general comprise of to about 43% of the total population and with their multiple changing natures from child hood to adult hood that created instability in their development. This stage of their life is highly challenged with bigger interest to test new thing by using the opportunities they have without clearly understanding the consequences. In our country, Ethiopia, there are many socio-economical and cultural issues that influence the occurrence of adolescent pregnancy. Adolescent pregnancies in marriage are very common as the average marital age in the rural part of the country is low (below 17 years). Marriage by abduction and rape are some of the reasons for adolescent pregnancy. As to the consensual sex, failure to prevent unwanted pregnancies due to lack of adequate attention to adolescent reproductive health needs are some of the reasons including university level adolescents.

For example, a national survey for fistula case in Ethiopia indicated that the average marital age for the fistula victims was below age 15.

### **Main factors contributing to risks of adolescent pregnancy**

The immature physiologic factors that failed to cope with pregnancies, the body is not ready, it is a growing body, the social-economical aspects are extremely important as well as the lack of access to services. Even in the area where services established, many are not adolescent friendly and don't encourage them to use the services.

### **What can be done by family and community to support adolescents?**

Many efforts can be done by both family and community in support of adolescents. These may include but not limited to the following. Family while growing and nurturing their child would follow and inform them what would happen to them during adolescence: the biological changes that will happen, how to cope with the change. Family is also required to listen the feelings of adolescents and advice them on the way they can manage the change positively. Communities on the other hand are expected to support adolescents and strongly fight against the occurrence of harmful practices such as marriage by abduction, early marriage, and others similar traditions.

## **The government position**

The government needs to give adequate attention to the adolescent reproductive health services demand starting at policy level and empowering the routine implementation. Health services workers need to revise the services delivery aspects establishing adolescent friendly reproductive services. They need additional training and motivation to support adolescents. The government should indicate its motivation by allocating adequate resources. Mechanisms should be in place to work with relevant stakeholders including family members, teachers, religious leaders and community leaders to bring desired outcomes.

## **Assignment document**

1. [Camacho AV, Chandra-Mouli V. Adolescent pregnancy: a global perspective. Paper presented at: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research; 2010 Sep 18; Geneva.](#)