

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 priority in Mongolia?**

In a country where 60% of the population is under age of 24 years old, adolescent pregnancy is definitely one of the public health priorities. It may have a different angle. We have too many unsafe abortions.

Since an abortion is legal in Mongolia, every woman has a right for a decision to terminate her pregnancy and she can do it in one of many abortion clinics that we have all over the place. There is no statistical data on number of clinics that specialize only on abortion, yet unofficial sources claim that this number rises year by year. Main clients of these clinics are young women aged 21 to 23 years; unfortunately, not all clinics offer quality services. We see now a rise of infertility among young women: one of the theories is that this is the consequence of unsafe abortion that these women have had when they were young.

## **Assignment story**

Three main factors that contribute to teenage pregnancies are:

1. Lack of comprehensive sex education, which would teach not only abstinence but also provide education on how to prevent from unwanted pregnancy and teach skills using pregnancy prevention methods.
2. Socio-cultural norms that may exist among groups of population, which enforce coercion of having sex in young girls.
3. Lack of access to services of sexual and reproductive health.

What can be done by families and communities to prevent this happening to other girls?

- Among many actions that can be taken to prevent adolescents' pregnancies, families and communities could select ones that they could implement. For example, they may consider introduction of comprehensive sexuality education in their communities with production and distribution of sex education materials among teenagers. Families may attend trainings that would offer them knowledge and skills on how to talk to their children about sex education, how to counsel youngsters on using pregnancy prevention methods.
- Communities may consider setting up adolescents friendly services in their areas that would offer sexual and reproductive health services for their teenagers. These services may provide combination of health services with sex education, offering information on how to prevent unwanted pregnancies with teaching skills on how to refuse sexual

coercion, on how to talk about using contraception and on how to use pregnancy prevention methods.

What can the Ministry of Health do to reorient the health care system to meet the needs of girls such as the one whose story you have heard?

- The health care system can be reoriented to provide preventive services, such as counseling and provision of pregnancy prevention methods. Currently, many clinics face results of sexual interactions among teenagers - unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections - that could have been prevented if comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services are in place.

## **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.](#)