

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

Alexander Omoarebu Uamai  
Lagos Island Maternity Hospital, Lagos, Nigeria

## **Is adolescent pregnancy a public health priority in Nigeria?**

In 2003, 16% of pregnancies among girls and women aged 15-24 years had been unintended compared with 10% in 1990, so adolescent pregnancy represents a major health challenge in Nigeria. Below are priority public health actions to surmount the challenges of adolescent pregnancy:

1. The Nigerian government with support from international agencies is trying to reduce the burden of adolescent pregnancies. More than 200 free health clinics provide care to nearly 5 million women and children within most states of the federation.
2. The Federal ministry of health has established several youth friendly centers to provide adolescents with accurate and confidential counseling on sex related matters across the country.
3. An already accepted new legislation by the Federal government that education for girls up to secondary school level be made free and that enough schools will be provided to guarantee that all girls seeking secondary education are accommodated.

## **Assignment story**

From the story the girl's plight can be traced to 3 principal factors:

1. Non-contraceptive use.
2. Lack of access to reproductive health care facilities.
3. Inability to say no to unwanted sex.

Below are the expected roles of family and community in preventing adolescent pregnancies:

- The family and community should help increase the knowledge of teens about unintended pregnancies and STDs, values and attitudes regarding sexual values and beliefs, perception of peer norms about sex and contraception and ability to say no to unwanted sex.
- After the family, the most important other influence on the health of young people is the school, and all the educational experiences provided by the school. The influence of schooling in the reduction of adolescent pregnancies can be seen in many areas. When a young girl receives secondary school education, she not only broadens her views, but learns about health and basic physiology of the human body which enables her to make many decisions.

Contributions of Health ministry to influencing health policies favorably for adolescent pregnancies:

- The ministry of health can contribute by helping the government to analyze the scope of the problem of adolescent pregnancies and its impact on health and wellbeing thereby providing concrete data with which to refocus the healthcare system.
- Mainstream adolescent pregnancy concerns into efforts to increase community awareness and demand for quality pregnancy care.
- Help develop a consistent policy framework on adolescent pregnancy and support changes in the legal and policy environment.

## **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.](#)