

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

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How adolescent pregnancy is a public health problem in Uganda?

Adolescent pregnancy is public health problem in Uganda. In Uganda, 24% of adolescents between the ages 15 to 19 years become pregnant each year and about 15% of these pregnancies end up in unsafe abortions. These pregnancies are associated with increased risks of adverse maternal and child health outcomes. Maternal mortality stands at 503 and infant mortality at 88 deaths per 1000 live births. Teenage pregnancies account for about 30% of maternal mortality.

Unfortunately, adolescent pregnancy is not a public health priority in Uganda. This is because unsafe abortions by adolescents occur but they are not documented. The abortion statistics refers to those cases that are referred to hospitals due to complications.

Uganda has a national Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health policy. However, the implementation strategy is not fully followed. Policies remain in paper and little implementation is done.

What are the three main factors that contributed to this?

1. Coerced and unsafe sexual initiation.
2. Unintended pregnancy and teenage motherhood with associated psychological trauma especially from coerced sex and associated embarrassment and bad feelings.
3. School dropout leading to lack of education, experience and income.

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

1. Offering adolescents different options especially dual protection against pregnancy and STIs as well as HIV and AIDS.
2. Empowering girls for development by returning adolescent mothers back to school.
3. Empowering girls to make right choices and decisions i.e. when to have sex and use condoms to prevent pregnancy and STIs and HIV/AIDS.
4. Offering psychological support (safety net) or second chances during pregnancy and delivery.

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

1. Design youth friendly health services by setting up teenage centers that address adolescent pregnancies: special antenatal care, delivery care and postnatal care services.
2. Promote dual protection for adolescent boys and girls.
3. Set up psychosocial support and counseling services for adolescent mothers to prevent unsafe abortions.
4. Do community sensitization to encourage parents to offer support to pregnant teenagers.

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.](#)