Pregnancy prevention & fertility regulation in adolescents
Training course in sexual and reproductive health research 2011

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World Health Organization
1. What is the magnitude of adolescent pregnancy?
2. What are the consequences of adolescent pregnancy?
3. What are the circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs?
4. What needs to be done to prevent early pregnancy in adolescents?
About 16 million girls aged 15-19 years give birth annually (11% of births worldwide). 95% of these pregnancies occur in developing countries.

The characteristics of young mothers are common across the regions of the world:
- Little education,
- Rural dwelling,
- Poor,
- Marginalized.

There are enormous regional differences


In most regions, adolescent pregnancy is declining. Sub Saharan Africa has seen the least level of decline.
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Greater likelihood of maternal mortality

In low and middle income countries, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death in women aged 15-19 years.

Early, unwanted pregnancies are associated with increased levels of induced abortion, which when carried out in unsafe conditions carries severe health risks, including death. In 2008, there were an estimated 3 million unsafe abortions in the world among 15-19 year olds per year.
Babies born to adolescent mothers face higher risks

- The adverse effects of adolescent childbearing extend to the health of their infants. Perinatal deaths are 50% higher among babies born to mothers under 20 years of age than among those born to mothers aged 20-29 years. Babies of adolescent mothers are also more likely to have low birth weight which increases the risk of ill health during infancy.

Potential risks to the adolescent mother's life prospects

• Pregnancy can bring status for a married adolescent in cultures where motherhood is the core aspect of a woman's identity.

• On the other hand, an unmarried pregnant adolescent may be driven away by her family, or abandoned by her partner & be left with no means of support.
Socio-economic deprivation: both a cause & consequence of adolescent pregnancy

Poverty → Too early pregnancy → Loss of educational & employment opportunities

"We young women are not prepared to become mothers. I would like to continue my studies. But since I have had my daughter, my options have changed because I have many more obligations now. I hope that this will not be a barrier for me to succeed in life."

Eylin 19, Honduras January 2006.

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Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.

- Sex within marriage
- Intended pregnancy
- Adolescent Pregnancy
- Unintended pregnancy
Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.

- Sex within marriage
- Sex outside a recognised union

Intended pregnancy

Unintended pregnancy

Adolescent Pregnancy.
Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.

- Sex within marriage
- Sex outside marriage
- Consensual sex
  - Within marriage
  - Outside a recognised union

Adolescent Pregnancy
- Intended pregnancy
- Unintended pregnancy
Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.

- **Intended pregnancy**
  - Sex within marriage
  - Sex outside a recognised union

- **Unintended pregnancy**
  - Consensual sex - Within marriage - Outside a recognised union
  - Non-consensual sex
1. What is the magnitude of adolescent pregnancy?
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Choosing the right interventions.

Intended pregnancy

- Advocate with families & communities
- Provide opportunities for study & work

Unintended pregnancy

Sex within marriage

Sex outside a recognised union

Adolescent Pregnancy
Choosing the right interventions.

- Sex within marriage
- Sex outside a recognised union
- Consensual sex
  - Within marriage
  - Outside a recognised union

Intended pregnancy

Adolescent

Enhance capacity to make well informed & judicious choices

Unintended pregnancy
Mass media

- Provide information & education
- Promote individual responsibility & protective norms
- Provide health services & products

Schools

Health services

Civil Society (Community Organizations)
Working with young men within & outside the context of marriage or other recognised union is a crucial component of successful interventions to prevent adolescent pregnancy and coerced sex.
Choosing the right interventions.

- Sex within marriage
- Sex outside a Recognised union

Intended pregnancy

Adolescent Pregnancy

Consensual sex:
- Within marriage
- Outside a recognised union

Provide a safety net & a second chance.

Non-consensual sex
Provide a safety net.

Making Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) widely available & accessible.

Providing safe abortion services (where legal)

or

Providing effective post-abortion care.
Preventing subsequent pregnancies is key

Preventing second pregnancies by supporting adolescent mothers.
Choosing the right interventions.

- Sex within marriage
- Sex outside a Recognised union
- Consensual sex:
  - Within marriage
  - Outside a recognised union
- Non-consensual sex

Intended pregnancy

Adolescent Pregnancy

Break the silence against sexual coercion & fight it vigorously.
Break the silence against sexual coercion & fight it vigorously.

- Bring perpetrators to justice.
- Mobilize public opinion to be intolerant of it.
- Protect girls/women from sexual harassment & coercion in educational institutions, workplaces & in other community settings.
- Empower them to protect themselves, and to ask for & get help when needed.