

Pregnancy prevention & fertility regulation in adolescents

Training course in sexual and reproductive health research 2011

Dr Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli
chandramouli@who.int

with thanks to Dr Virginia Camacho



**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 ?

Adolescent pregnancy



World Health
Organization

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.

Source: Growing up global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries (National Research Council, 2005).

There are enormous regional differences

6/1000 women aged 15-19 in Eastern Asia – 122/1000 women aged 15-19 in sub Saharan Africa.

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.

Source: WHO. Women and Health. Today's evidence. Tomorrow's agenda. WHO. 2010.

Potential risks to the adolescent mother's life prospects

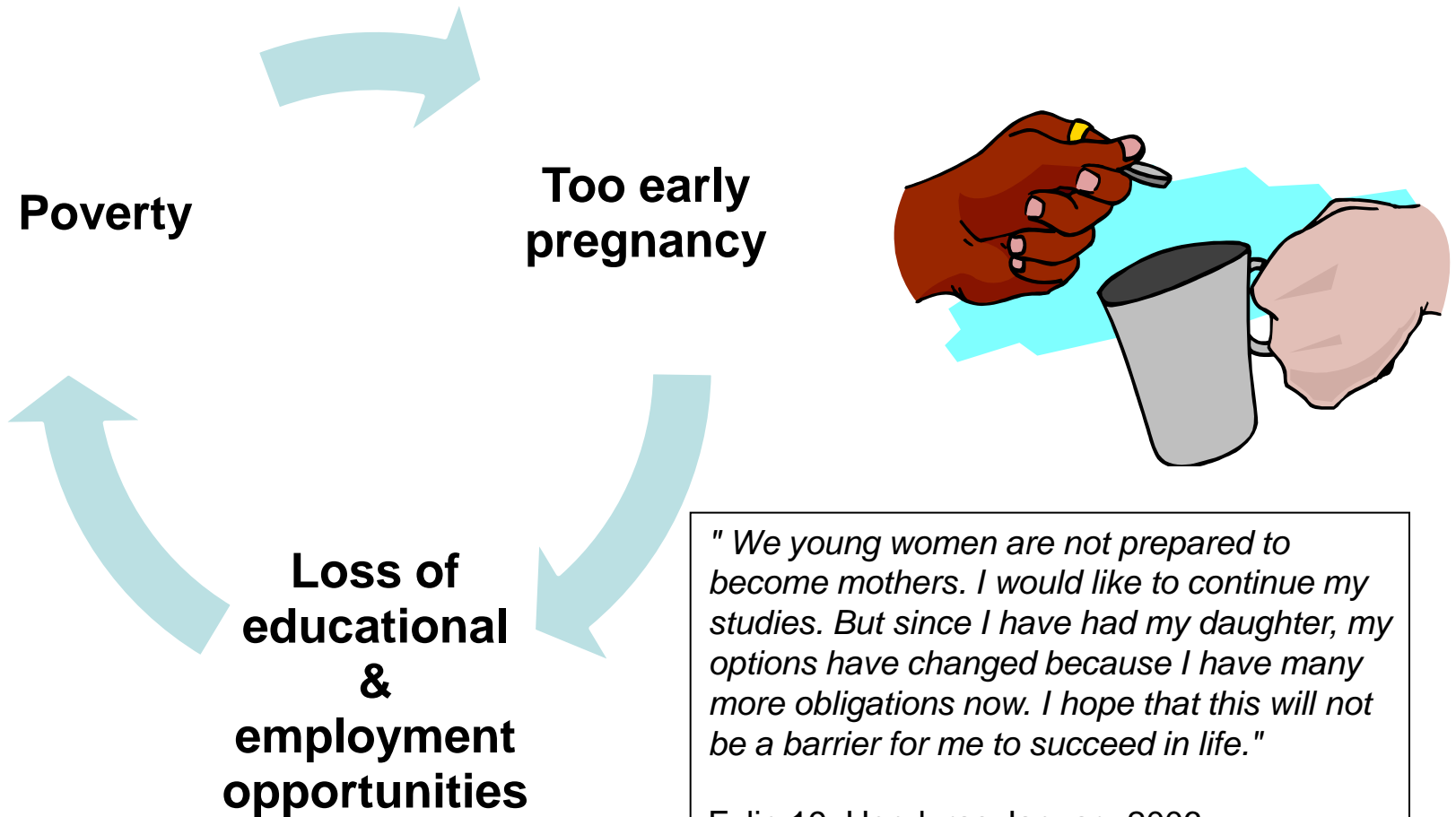
- Pregnancy can bring status for a married adolescent in cultures where motherhood is the core aspect of a woman's identity.



- 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



" 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.

Source: World Development Report 2006 (World Bank, 2006.)

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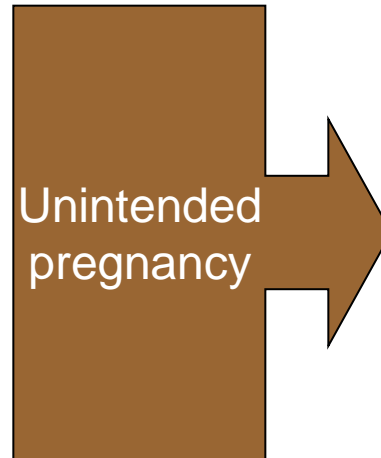
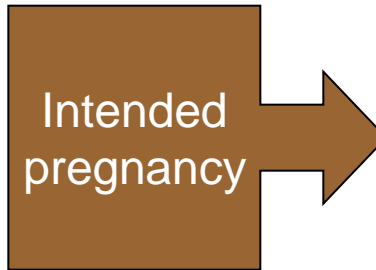


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Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.

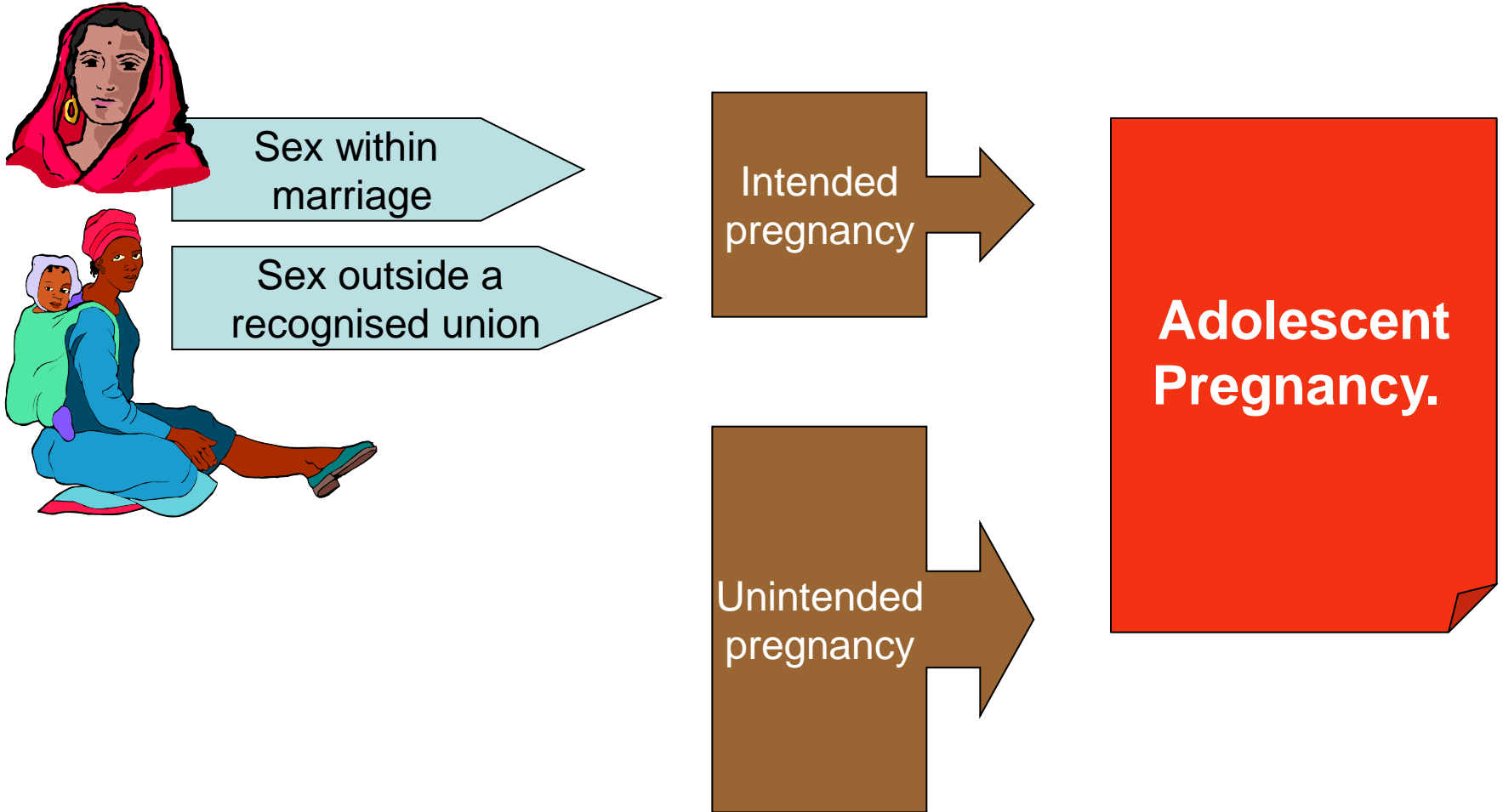


Sex within marriage



**Adolescent
Pregnancy.**

Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.



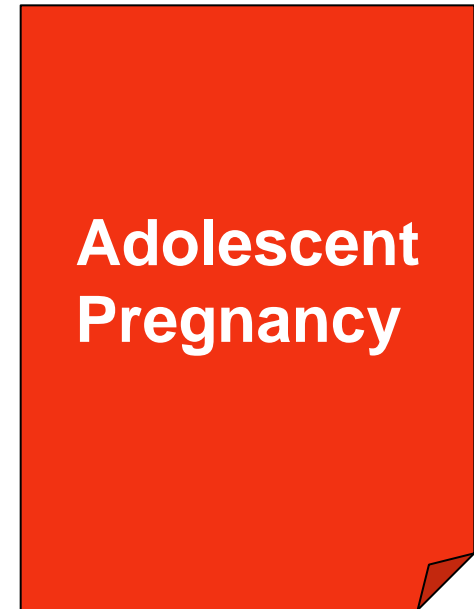
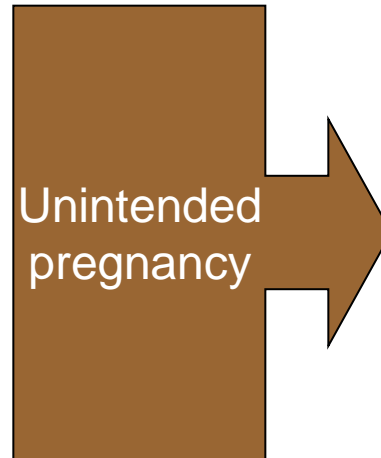
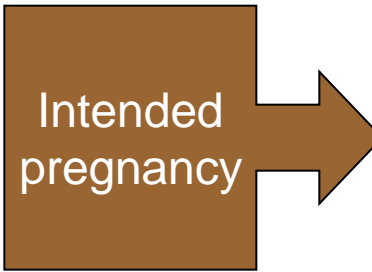
Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.



Sex within marriage

Sex outside marriage

Consensual sex
- Within marriage
- Outside a recognised union



Circumstances in which adolescent pregnancy occurs.



Sex within marriage



Sex outside a recognised union

Consensual sex
- Within marriage
- Outside a recognised union



Non-consensual sex



Intended pregnancy

Unintended pregnancy

Adolescent Pregnancy

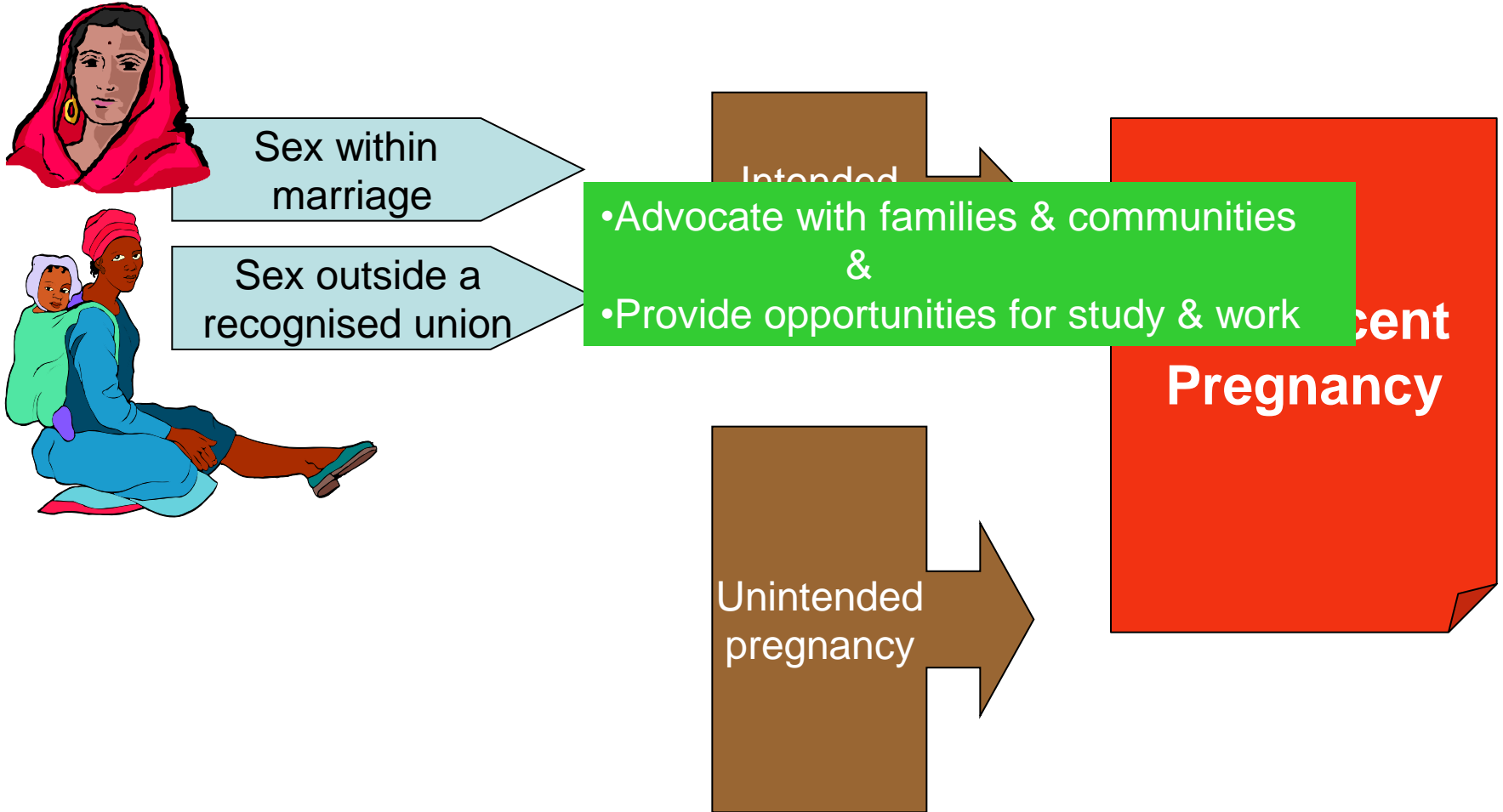
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Adolescent pregnancy



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Choosing the right interventions.



Choosing the right interventions.

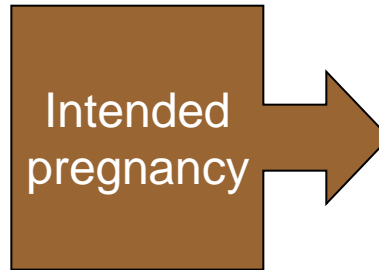


Sex within marriage

Sex outside a recognised union

Consensual sex

- Within marriage
- Outside a recognised union

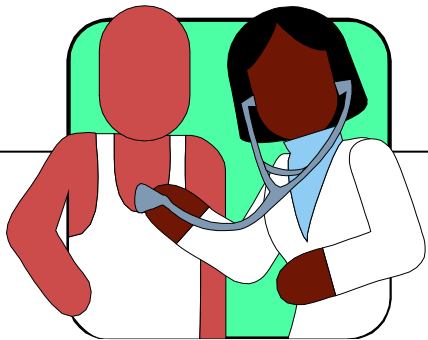


Enhance capacity to make well informed & judicious choices



Linking HIV & pregnancy prevention.

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



Health services



Schools



Mass media



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

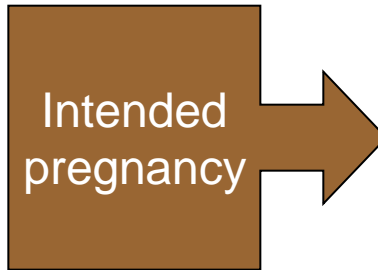


Sex outside a Recognised union

Consensual sex:
- Within marriage
- Outside a recognised union

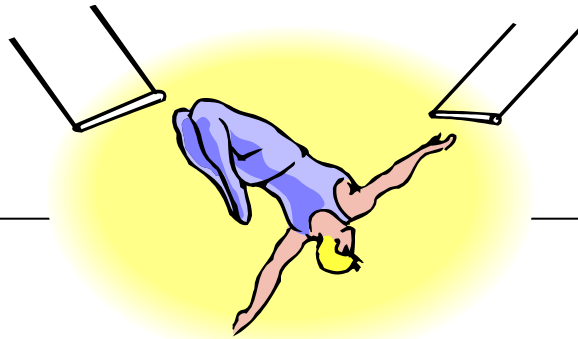


Non-consensual sex



Adolescent Pregnancy

Provide a safety net & a second chance.



Provide a safety net.



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

Useful reference: Program for Appropriate Technology. Increasing youth access to services. Directions in Global Health. 2004; 1 (1) 4-5.

Providing safe abortion services (where legal)

or

Providing effective post-abortion care.

Useful reference: Herrick J post abortion care programs for adolescents. FOCUS Youth Adolescent Reproductive Health Briefs. No. 5, Washington DC, USA. Pathfinder International. Focus on Youth Adults. 2002.



Preventing subsequent pregnancies is key

Preventing second pregnancies by supporting adolescent mothers.

Useful reference: McNeil P. Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation. Preventing second adolescent pregnancies by supporting young mothers. Youth Adult Reproductive Health. Project Highlights. Focus on Young Adults Directions in Global Health. 1998.



Choosing the right interventions.



Sex within marriage



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Adolescent Pregnancy

Break the silence against sexual coercion & fight it vigorously.

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