



The Impact of Lack of Ethics and of Healthy Leisure Activities on the Occurrence of Early Pregnancies in Porto-novo

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To cite this article:

Raymond-Bernard Ahouandjinou, Carolle-Nelly Codo, Arnauld Gbaguidi, Cyriaque S. C. Ahodekon, Céline Atinhunkpinda Ahouandjinou et Marlène Akakpo. The Impact of Lack of Ethics and of Healthy Leisure Activities on the Occurrence of Early Pregnancies in Porto-novo. *Advances*. Vol. 2, No. 4, 2021, pp. 68-72. doi: 10.11648/j.advances.20210204.12

Received: September 28, 2021; **Accepted:** November 2, 2021; **Published:** December 2, 2021

Abstract: The issue of school-based pregnancies is a real danger for the future of girls around the world. The objective of the research carried out is to analyze the causes of the occurrence of teenage pregnancies in the municipality of Porto-Novo. Starting from a qualitative approach, associated with accidental techniques with reasoned choice for sampling, the aforementioned research thus made it possible to apprehend not only the causes, but also the consequences of this phenomenon, while passing by the analysis of the perceptions of the respondents. on this subject. The investigative technique used in this research is the semi-structured interview with the interview guide as the main tool. At the end of the investigations, the results show that the factors which are at the base of early pregnancies are essentially environmental, psychological, socio-cultural and political, which obviously has consequences, both for the child and for the child. for the mother. These include, among others, medical, psycho-social and economic risks. These pregnancies constitute a blockage for the pursuit of studies. Some adolescent girls end up with abortion, which sometimes leads to death or other health consequences. To remedy this, it is therefore important to think about the involvement of all social actors in education at various levels in the knowledge and prevention of teenage pregnancies.

Keywords: Early Pregnancies, Ethics, Leisure, Teenagers

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of early pregnancies is a challenge faced by the youth population around the world. In fact, fertility under the age of 18 should be the object of special attention, since pregnancy at that age increases the medical, psychological and social risks for both the mother and the child World Health Organization [10]. The rate of early childbearing (before age 18) is between 40% and 50% while 8 to 15% of girls have had a child by age 15, WHO [12].

The literature emphasizes the risk of pregnancy-related complications for women fewer than 20 compared to other women of childbearing age. Teenagers are at higher risk of pregnancy-related consequences than an older population N.

Bajos et al., [1]. The complications of early pregnancies can be viewed from three perspectives. First, children born to teenage mothers are at greater risk of morbidity and mortality than children of older mothers. Actually, young mothers are more at risk of giving birth to premature and low weight babies (less than 2500 grams) or even very low weight babies (less than 1500 grams) than older women, which represents a very high risk for the life of the baby. Babies born prematurely are at additional risk of neonatal or perinatal mortality (death occurring during or just after birth), WHO/UNFPA [11].

Second, teenage mothers are more susceptible to complications during pregnancy. As a matter of fact, their infant bodies are not fully prepared to carry a pregnancy.

They are therefore prone to diseases such as hypertension during pregnancy (the most common complication of pregnancies among women having their first child), anemia (depletion of red blood cells), dystocia (difficulty in giving birth), obstetric fistula (an abnormal connection between the bladder and the vagina or between the bladder and the rectum that occurs as a result of a complicated pregnancy), puerperal sepsis (infectious disease which occurs after childbirth or miscarriage, especially in cases where the expulsion of the placenta is not complete) and dangerous abortions, which occur very often in young women who are expecting their first child Bhatia J. [3]. Finally, these consequences are not only biological, but also economic, social and psychological. Indeed, many teenage mothers come from economically poor backgrounds and their early entry into the reproductive life considerably reduces the educational and therefore professional opportunities available to them. Generally, this affects the entire life of the young mother and her offspring, since after this early pregnancy she spends a good part of her life at home while she should be in school. The early pregnancy makes her a professionally impoverished mother. Throughout the pregnancy, the young teenager is stressed and lacks self-confidence and is the object of insults, S. Djoumetio [5]. Considering the various consequences of the phenomenon, it is needful to ask the following question: What are the causes of early pregnancies in Porto-Novo?

2. Material and Methods

This research is qualitative in nature because it analyzes and seeks information on the causes of early pregnancy among teenagers. The target population is young adolescent girls in high schools and colleges and students' parents. The purposive sampling techniques and the accidental technique were used to sample students and students' parents respectively.

The investigative technique used in this research is the semi-structured interview with the interview guide as the main tool. The analysis was first carried out through the transcription of the respondents' speeches. Then, the speeches were subjected to M. De Queiroz's, M. Ziolkowski's theory of symbolic interactionism S. Djoumetio [14].

3. Perceptions of Teenage Girls in High Schools and Colleges About Pregnancy

The problem of early pregnancy in schools has been on the increase for the past few years now. Actors in the education system, NGOs and many other organizations continue to work in this sector to limit its damages to young adolescent girls in Benin. Young adolescents in high schools and middle schools in Porto-Novo have various and diverse perception of pregnancy in schools. The following comments from an interviewee tell us more about that.

"Uh... in my opinion an early pregnancy is a pregnancy that occurs before the age of 15, in my opinion, it's a

pregnancy that appears when you're not grown up (...) it's a pregnancy that you don't want." (Mr. P., Student)

This interviewee maintains that an early pregnancy is an unwanted pregnancy and which occurs when one is still young. In the same sense, an interviewee reveals the following:

"I don't know what it means, but it must be unwanted pregnancies, or maybe, in my opinion, you have to be at least 18 to get pregnant." (A. D., Student)

Thus, after hesitation, the respondent links the phenomenon of early pregnancy to that of unwanted pregnancy. From the statements of our respondents, it can be inferred that they have a partial understanding of the concept of early pregnancy in school while some have no clear idea about it. One should say that these learners' perception depends on their environment, on their life experience and especially on their level of maturity. Other interviewees based their understanding of early pregnancy on the girl's physical maturity or morphology. This was suggested by one parent who said:

"Sometimes children are small in stature and yet get pregnant. Sometimes they are also large in stature and it doesn't feel like they are children. But one thing is sure; they are not yet in the physical condition to be pregnant. There is a problem of maturity of the body." (P. A., Parent)

According to that parent, whatever her morphology, a girl is not in the condition to carry a pregnancy and make it successfully to the end. Another parent says:

"Early pregnancy happens when the girl's body is not mature. Of course, in general, we say that an early pregnancy is any pregnancy that occurs before 18, but when the girl herself has a big body and everything in place, I don't think we'll still talk about early pregnancy (...) but that is not to say it's a good thing." (J. Z., Parent)

That parent thinks the young person can be considered mature and able to procreate if she has a certain stature. In short, parents perceive early pregnancies as a harmful phenomenon that adolescent should avoid. One parent stated that:

"Teenage pregnancy is not a good thing. It is not a hereditary or family thing." (H. C., Parent)

From the above, we can conclude that according to parents the phenomenon of early pregnancy is not a good thing and should not be considered as a fatality. Other respondents believe that it is based on the economic and social situation of the young girl:

"The girl must have a job to take care of herself and the child." (H. C., Student)

Thus, a pregnancy in a young girl is considered early when she is not financially stable. As concerned with the perceptions of early pregnancy in schools, students equate it with unwanted pregnancy and therefore see it as a harmful phenomenon. Parents also think that regardless of the girl's morphology, teenage pregnancy is early and should not be seen as a fatality.

4. Causes of Early Pregnancy

Several factors, including economic, social and socio-cultural factors, can explain the phenomenon of early pregnancy in schools. Here are some of the factors given by some of our interviewees.

"For me it's unassisted puberty, money, and taboo with parents, immaturity and the upbringing. Oh it is the taste for the sexual act that makes to no longer understand the aim of parents' prohibition." (Z. D. Student).

Thus, for the respondent, early pregnancies are caused by parental neglect, lack of communication, of money, of maturity, and of ethics. A student's words support the above statement:

"Lack of ethics can cause parental neglect. Parents who don't take care of their children." (A. Z., student)

According to these statements, lack of ethics and parental neglect could favor the occurrence of an early pregnancy in a young girl. Another parent agreed with that and said:

"In my opinion, the main reason for teenage pregnancies is failure to heed parents' teachings; in addition, during puberty, children rebel and engage in bad fellowship (...) the parents are also to blame for lack of strictness in the upbringing." » (T. H., Parent)

According to that parent, early pregnancies are caused by the little attention given to parents' teaching, rebellion, and largesse in education. A student adds:

"The occurrence of early pregnancies is explained by the young person's need for discovery, ignorance of the consequences of sex, naivety, early engagement in love affairs, non-use of condoms and bad fellowship." P. H. (Student)

For the interviewee, early pregnancies occur because of the need for discovery, ignorance, and naivety, the influence of the network of friends, early love affairs and non-use of contraceptives.

"If parents do not communicate with their children, if they are not exemplary themselves, if the education they give is neither ethical nor consistent, and if the girl receives wrong or incomplete information, she stands a chance to get pregnant." (O. I., Parent)

On the other hand, a student's parent states this:

"We notice that the kind of leisure activities young people should be engaging in is not really available in the city. This makes them more interested in cell phones, in sending every time text messages that are not of their age, in going to clubs, watching videos that will not teach them anything good. They prefer sex videos that are called "porn". And all this push them to start practicing too." (O. T., Parent)

Thus, this parent thinks that lack of leisure time leads to early pregnancies. Actually, early pregnancies are said to be due to teenagers' aspiration to modernity, so much so that we now witness a phenomenon of acculturation. The advent of telenovelas and social networks has lead young girls to adopt bad sexual behaviors, which often leads to pregnancy. Sexuality is still a taboo subject between parents and teenagers. We can therefore explain that phenomenon by

teenagers' lack of experience, immaturity and poor knowledge of the subject.

Several reasons have been identified for early pregnancy, the most basic of which are lack of ethics and lack of healthy leisure activities in their social environment. Similarly, as causes, we also identified parental neglect, lack of parent-child communication, lack of money, lack of maturity, failure to follow parental advice, rebellion, carelessness, ignorance, naivety, poor friendship, early romantic and sexual relationships, the need for discovery, and non-use of contraceptives. All of these causes are part of the environmental factors K. Haldre et al. [7], psychological P. Faucher and S. Dappe [6] S. Djoumetio [5], socio-cultural and political factors F. Herbigniaux and Y. Thai S. Djoumetio [8].

In addition, other environmental, socio-economic and socio-demographic factors must not be put aside, K. Haldre et al. [7], namely: cultural influence, ethnicity, region, poor future prospects, neighbourhood, poor social integration, school failure, low education, and the acquisition and recognition of social status. Thus, the previous research works establish a causal link between the occurrence of pregnancy during adolescence and the lack of ethics and healthy leisure.

So what are the implications of such pregnancies?

5. Consequences of Early Pregnancy

Pregnancy in schools is a social phenomenon with multiple causes and negative effects on young girls and their academic performance. The results of the interviews show the consequences of pregnancy in schools. In this regard, one respondent stated:

"It really destroys the child's life. It totally destroys her because when it happens, she is left to her own devices. The parents will abandon her." (D. A., Parent)

This parent believes that early pregnancies lead to the destruction of the girl's future. She finds herself alone in her situation as her parents abandon her. Pregnancies also prevent teenagers from continuing their studies. Which is worse, they get under psychological trauma in case the author rejects the pregnancy. Others sometimes resort to abortion, which can lead to death or sterility. Another parent states the following:

"Destruction of the young mother's future, physical immaturity, health risks are the consequences of early pregnancy, in my opinion. This phenomenon may lead the young mother to drop out of school; the mother may want to abort which sometimes leads to death." (T. A. Parent)

This parent highlights health and psychosocial risks. Indeed, early pregnancies in schools have an impact on both the young girl and the social environment where she lives. They damage young girls' health, contribute in their growing old and can seal the future of the young mother. They also lead to girls dropping out of school which is a hindrance to the development of society, as they cannot participate in making decisions within the family unit and their society. As a result, they will always be marginalized. It is also necessary

to note that the education of teenagers is very often bad and failed, because the young girl has not yet finished acquiring the knowledge and know-how of life.

When a girl becomes pregnant, she is exposed to health WHO/UNFPA [11], psychosocial and economic risks J. Benoit [2].

A WHO [10] survey concludes that there is probably no special risk for adolescent mothers from hypertension associated with their young age. However, hypertension is the most common complication of pregnancy among women having their first child and therefore is a common complication for many adolescent mothers WHO/UNFPA [11]. He can also have complications with childbirth. For example, according to a UNFPA study [13], adolescent girls are particularly susceptible to obstructed labor because their pelvis is not fully developed, and the numbers surrounding this disease are alarming.

Moreover, according to the WHO [12], the risk of dying from a childbirth-related illness is in a number of countries twice as high for adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 as for women older. It should be noted that this mortality also affects the juvenile layer. In fact, infant mortality is higher for children of mothers under 20 years old. Most infant deaths occurring during or immediately after birth have several causes. But hospital studies WHO/UNFPA [11] have found higher rates of neonatal mortality in adolescent babies.

Perinatal mortality increases by about 50% in babies born to mothers under the age of 20 than in babies born to mothers aged 20 to 29. Babies born to teenage mothers are more prone to have low birth weight with long term health risks WHO [12].

To reduce or even eradicate this social phenomenon that undermines schools, several respondents proposed a few solutions.

"Teach the use of condom to those who are sexually active, but abstinence to others. Our parents should talk to us about sexuality from the age of puberty." (H. C. Student)

She believes that parents need to prepare children psychologically through interpersonal communication with young girls in order to avoid the worst. They also need to share their experience with their daughters to show them that having sex at a very early age is wrong. Some parents suggest this:

"In my opinion, we need to find healthy hobbies like sports, dancing to occupy our children. Then we should as their parent forbid them bad company and especially spend a lot of time with them giving them advice." (Z. M Parent)

It is therefore needful to develop strategies to keep children busy with games, field trips, and movies. Parents should discuss sexuality with their children shamelessly.

Through their theory of symbolic interactionism, M. De Queiroz and M. Ziolkowski [14] spoke about the link between the cause and the consequence of an action. The cause mentioned is basically the lack of healthy leisure and ethics in the schools of Porto-Novo. Another parent suggests this:

"What we can ask to stop this situation is that the state

builds more youth centers. Especially during this vacation period, they need that to learn, to engage in educational activities and to relax. This will prevent them from falling back on sex. Apart from that, they need to be closer to people. Otherwise, I can't let my kids go too far to have fun. I prefer that they stay at home under my watch, the world outside is dangerous." (M. O., Parent)

He adds:

"Youth centers must also be kept lively and the activities that are carried out there, educational, otherwise there is no point in going there. We also need to think about organizing outreaches about the phenomenon so that parent-child communication that cannot be done at home be done there. Youth centers must be built, activities run and, above all, educational games that contribute to the relaxation, entertainment and development of children must be played." (M. O., Parent)

Finally, another one suggests this:

"The perpetrators of early pregnancies must be punished by the law with the utmost rigor. Teachers who impregnate our daughters must be imprisoned and removed from their positions because they are ruining the future of our children. The children themselves must sanction the adults who harass them and especially the teachers." (P. A. Parent)

Some parents argue that punishment of perpetrators should be enforced to discourage them forever. Young girls must have the courage to denounce harassers to avoid pregnancy in schools, which is on the rise in Porto-Novo.

The solutions put forward by the interviewees boil down to the use of contraceptives and abstinence, abstinence, parent-child communication, leisure activities (through the construction of youth centers), following the advice given by parents, and sanctions for adult perpetrators. The results of the research work agree with those of, Buitendij K., and Oosterhout R. [4] who states that such risks can be considered under two main axes:

"medical risks related to the complication and survival of both the child and the mother, on the one hand, and psycho-social and economic risks such as the perpetuation of the women's inferior status, economic poverty, de-schooling and marginalization, on the other."

The occurrence of pregnancy in the school environment affects the young adolescent girl in one way or another and can have negative effects on her life. This is why we need to think of adequate strategies to deal with it. For WHO [12], interventions should be oriented initially towards the prevention of teenage pregnancies by reducing the number of marriages before the age of 18; building understanding and support for reducing the number of pregnancies before the age of 20; the increase in contraceptive use among adolescent girls and the struggle to reduce the number of forced sex among adolescent girls. Secondly, they must take action against the prevention of negative consequences in terms of reproductive health by reducing the number of unsafe abortions in adolescents and making skilled care available during pregnancy, childbirth and others. the postnatal period WHO [9]. For UNFPA [13], the content of school curricula in

sexual education, health and reproduction needs to be enriched. Notions relating to sex education, health and reproduction are seen late. In order to prevent this phenomenon, interpersonal and mass communication should be prioritized. Regarding pregnancy prevention strategies in schools, they are essentially based on three axes: improving access to education / information for young people and students, in particular on sexual and reproductive health, access to services adapted to the needs of young people, but also the effective punishment of the perpetrators of pregnancies. In addition, the strategies recommended for school and community support and reintegration are raising awareness of the return to school, and support by school officials and parents.

6. Conclusion

As a serious public health issue, the problem of early pregnancy negatively affects not only the girl, but also the life of the child and the girl's parents. According to the WHO [8], nearly 16 million teenage girls worldwide between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth to children each year. Given the seriousness and expansion of the phenomenon, a study was conducted in the city of Porto-Novo.

It was noted that many factors favor early pregnancy. They are environmental, psychological, socio-cultural and political, with dramatic consequences for the life of both the child and the mother, including medical, psycho-social and economic risks. Therefore, there is need for all social stakeholders in education to get involved in communication about and prevention of early pregnancy. These include the girls themselves, parents, state authorities, health zone leaders, churches and schools.

If those social actors would all agree to use all the means at their disposal to reduce the rate of occurrence of early pregnancy, we could hope for some notable changes. Teenage pregnancy is a complex reality that cannot be fully addressed by a single study. There are several other aspects of this issue that deserve further investigation.

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