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EARLY MOTHERHOOD AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

Abstract

The article discusses current problems associated with early maternity and explores the main causes and consequences that affect motherhood at an early age. The purpose of the study is to identify the young people's attitudes toward early maternity based on the material of the survey, attended by the students of Kuban institutions of higher education. The total number of the respondents is 90 young people (F=70, M=20) aged from 18 to 25 years.

Keywords: *adolescence, adolescent (teenage) pregnancy, sexual education, early motherhood.*

Introduction

Adolescent or teenage pregnancy has become an important global public health problem, more specifically in developing countries. According to statistics, each year about 16 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 and 2.5

million girls under the age of 16 give birth in developing countries, e.g., South Asia, Western Europe, India and Nigeria [1].

Western social analysts and researchers have listed some reasons for which the number of adolescent pregnancies is increasing, despite the intervention of public health institutions. Therefore, the causes vary from socio-economic status, lack of education, teenagers' sexual activity, to family history of early fertility [2], [3]. [4], [5]. The major causes of teenage pregnancies include limited access to sexual education and sexual health services. New technology is also considered as one of the major culprits to the increased number of teenage pregnancy cases. Easy access to technology and the curiosity of adolescents to engage in sexual activities without proper knowledge of family planning and contraceptives often results in unplanned pregnancies [6]

There are distinctly different cultural and social attitudes toward young parenthood. On the one hand, political and religious leaders use cultural and moral norms to shape public opinion and promote public policy to prevent it. Martin J. A. presents national vital statistics on the state of teenage pregnancy, which confirm the allegations of a serious social problem [7]. Demographic studies by Alan Guttmacher Institute and other organizations analyze statistical descriptions of adolescent pregnancy in the US [9]. On the other hand, there are groups like the World Health Organization (WHO) considering cases of teenage sexuality and pregnancy in terms of human development, health, and psychological needs [10].

The attitude of young people to this problem is also ambiguous. For some adolescents pregnancy and childbirth are planned and wanted. For others - it's quite the opposite. From the standpoint of the adolescents, the attitude towards teenage pregnancy is marked with ambivalence [4]. McCall points out the evident association between deprivation, absence of socio-economic values and teenage pregnancy [12]. Minnis believes that 'limited socio-economic opportunities may play a large role in persistently high pregnancy rates among

adolescents' [13]. This brings up the question: "What is the attitude of young people to the problem of early motherhood?" Are they really prepared for the role of a mother despite their young age?

The current study

Nowadays adolescent (teenage) pregnancy has become quite a common phenomenon and the consequences of such a life are often sad, leading to psychological, physiological and social problems. The purpose of the current survey is to determine the social attitudes of young people towards early marriages.

Materials and Methods

Using an online questionnaire (Table 1) we conducted a survey among students of the universities in Krasnodar Region (Russia). The subjects of the research include ninety respondents aged from 18 to 25 years old. The total number of the respondents is 70 women (77.7%) and 20 men (22.3%).

Table №1. "Attitudes of young people towards early motherhood"

Questions	Possible response	%
1. Is there a problem of adolescent (teenage) pregnancy in modern society, in your opinion?	-Yes -No	73% 27%
2. How do you feel about adolescent (teenage) pregnancy?	-Positive; -More positive than negative; -Rather negative than positive; -Negative; -Difficult to answer	1% 16% 43% 40%
3. In your opinion, what are the main reasons for adolescent (teenage) pregnancy?	-A desire to become an adult -A low level of contraception awareness -A fear of losing first love -A Teenage promiscuity -Family distress -Alcohol and drug intoxication -Violence -Other	37% 33% 30% 63% 37% 53% 2% 2%
4. Do you agree with the opinion that the Media promote adolescent (teenage) pregnancy, raising this topic shows, movies, news, etc?	-Yes -No -Difficult to answer	50% 27% 23%
5. What affects the growth of adolescent (teenage) pregnancies in modern Russian	-Lack of government programs for the sexual education of adolescents;	

society?	-The decline of morality in Russian society; -Parental indifference in adolescent sex; -Low standards of living of the population; -Mass media; -Low contraception awareness; -Other	67% 50% 43%
6. Do you think we should introduce sexual education into the school curriculum?	-Yes -No -Difficult to answer	52% 28% 20%
7. Who did you get information about sexual education from?	-Parents; -Friends / peers -School teachers; -Specialists of medical organizations; -Social workers; -Mass media; -The Internet.	20% 52% 10% 26%
8. Who do you think should be responsible for sexual education of adolescents?	-Parents -School -Friends / peers -Doctors -Mass media -The Internet -Social Services	67% 33%
9. What disadvantages do you see in adolescent pregnancy, in your opinion?	-Physiological health disorder; -Forced marriages; -Incomplete education; -Disapproval of others; -Isolation from peers; -Increase in the number of orphans; -Depression; -Lack of career prospects; -Low level of income; -Problems in personal life -Conflicts with parents -Other	70% 56% 43% 7%

Results and Conclusion

The study revealed that 73% of the respondents believe that the problem of early maternity is quite essential in society, while 27% noted that the problem of early motherhood is not so acute. According to the results obtained, 43% of the respondents showed a negative attitude towards early motherhood, while the remaining 16% regarded it rather positively than negatively, with only 1% reporting that teenage pregnancy represents a positive experience.

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (63%) reported that the main cause of early motherhood is teenage promiscuity; the remaining answers are distributed as follows: 53% of the participants mentioned “alcohol and drug intoxication”, 37% of the interviewees blamed the influence of family distress. Furthermore, 37% of the interviewees believed that adolescent pregnancy mostly occurs as the consequence of girls' desire to become an adult. A third of the respondents (33%) opted for “a low level of contraception awareness”, while 30% favored for “a fear of losing first love” and consciously initiating their pregnancy; 4 % argued that early motherhood comes due to violence, “a low level of intelligence” and “stupidity”.

It is noteworthy that the prevailing answer to the question “What influences the number of teenage pregnancies in modern Russian society?” was ‘a decline of morality’ (67% respondents). A half of the respondents considered that the issue is affected by the indifferent parents’ attitude towards sexual relations among adolescents; 43% of the respondents believed that the low level of contraception awareness is the main factor that contributes to the growth of teenage pregnancies.

The analysis of the results of the study revealed that in modern society there certainly exists a current problem of adolescence pregnancy, and most respondents have a negative attitude to it. Early pregnancy has such consequences as forced marriages, incomplete education and an increase in the number of orphans. It was revealed that parents and school should deal with such issues as sexual education, since the majority of respondents have a positive attitude towards introducing such a discipline in the school curriculum.

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