

Teenage pregnancy: health and social issue analysis



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Today teenage pregnancy is evolving as a serious problem all over the world. It defines as getting pregnant below eighteen years. Researches reveal that almost fifteen million teen pregnancies occur every year. These teen pregnancies are mostly common in developing countries where teenagers lack parental monitoring and they are unaware of modern birth control methods. Many teenagers plan to get pregnant, but mostly do not. Unplanned pregnancies occur at all levels of age, creed, and race with a particular negative impact among teenage population.

Teen pregnancy is an important social problem and as well as a major health issue, that need to reduce because of the negative consequences that it bears on teenagers. They are at risk of conception and many sexually transmitted infections. On fearing the medical procedures and parental responses, they hide the fact of pregnancy and therefore are at more risk of its severe consequences. They did not receive parental care on time. Moreover, studies shows that teenagers are psychologically immature and unstable and the additional stress of pregnancy on them brings up negative results.

In 2000, “ The Health of Nation” failed to reduce the rate of teen pregnancies. Another policy set the target to halve the rate by 2010. In order to achieve the target, many other policies were set based on researches especially on focusing the importance of parental monitoring and use of contraception.

Recent literature on teen pregnancy prevention mostly focuses on parental monitoring. Role of parents in this issue is crucial. They are responsible for

educating their children and providing them enough knowledge about the negative consequences of teen pregnancies. The rate of teen pregnancies is high especially among those who suffer from poor education in their childhood. Another interest that lies on the parent's role in reducing the unplanned teen pregnancies is by talking openly with the teens about this issue through several controversies exist on whether it increases the sexual activity or vice versa (DiClemente, 2001).

The studies mainly focus on parental monitoring in order to prevent teen pregnancies because the effectiveness of the parental influence in attitude, knowledge, and behavior among their children lower the teen's risk of adolescent pregnancy. Research shows that higher parental monitoring decreases the sexual activity and avoids unplanned pregnancies in teens. Parental monitoring has a positive effect on healthy adolescent development. Influence of parental role and relation between parenthood and teen pregnancy is clear in this issue.

In order to have an effect or successful outcome of parental monitoring, not only teenagers but parents also need education to monitor effectively without being overprotective. They need education to talk efficiently to their children about birth control methods, safe sex, and sexually transmitted diseases. The parents need to focus on their views and concepts about sex education and find out if they are comfortable and know how to talk to their children. Identification of adolescent females who are usually at high risk of getting unplanned pregnancies is the key to prevention. Parents require education no matter the setting of teen is at the primary care office, clinic,

school, or emergency rooms. Further research needs to be done for improving parental skills and their outcomes.

Nationally, the teen pregnancies are increasing at a staggering rate. However, some appropriate programs help in preventing these pregnancies among the teenagers. There are federal laws for promoting abstinence only education and providing funding for these programs based on abstinence. Such programs not only help to prevent the teen pregnancies but they positively correlate with decrease in the amount of unplanned pregnancies and births among teenagers. The recent literature study of Stanger-Hall and Hall in 2011 reveals that the most effective approach is the ' level 1 style' that provides comprehensive safe sex education and STD education. It covers the use of birth control methods and abstinence. The Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are confident in educating parents about the positive impacts of these programs in preventing teen pregnancies (Stanger-Hall, 2011).

Several intervention based programs need to help prevent the unplanned pregnancies in the adolescent. Some of the interventions require coming from the parents at home or office of primary care provider. It is the job of NPs to identify those adolescents, who show high-risk behavior in these pregnancies. The NPs need to ensure the confidentiality of their patients and develop the trusting relationship with them. They need to give education to the parents efficiently and refer them to the websites or groups regarding teen pregnancy prevention.

Contraception or the use of contraceptive methods is another way of preventing teen pregnancies. Research shows that most of the unplanned pregnancies among the teenagers are due the fact that they are either unaware of using contraceptive methods or they do not use contraception consistently. Free contraceptives available and provided for high and middle school students within schools around the world help in preventing the great amount of teen pregnancies. However, these schools preferred to give contraceptives to only those children who have their parents' permission (Shoupe, 2007).

A comprehensive education on safe sex has successful effects on the use of contraception. The Family Growth National Survey reveals that teenagers who receive safe sex education that includes contraception and prevention from sexually transmitted diseases, are less likely to have unplanned pregnancies. Contraception such as birth controls and condoms offered at affordable or discounted prices may help to reduce teen pregnancies. The effective and appropriate use of contraception will contract sexually transmitted diseases. It will not encourage the teenagers to have sex but will lower the risk of unplanned teen pregnancies.

School-based health centers or SBHCs is a great community resource for adolescents to provide friendly primary care services to this population. More SBHCs need across the nation to open in order to release their restrictions of providing contraceptive services. Intervention based programs are changing the sexual education standards which means to change some of the laws at the federal, state, and local level. The new standards of National Sexuality

Education released in 2001 focus on changing the federal, state, and local laws.

Social programs started with the purpose of preventing teen pregnancies began to disappear slowly. US administration provides some limited financial investment only for evidence based programs. Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programs and other programs like Planned Parenthood help to prevent the teen pregnancies by providing low cost or free birth control and contraception to teenagers (Bennett, 2005). In this way, service providers implement these programs effectively and successfully. They are developing new strategies and policies that will prevent unplanned teen pregnancies.

In conclusion, teen pregnancy is preventable that is a major social and health issue burdening many communities around the world. Early comprehensive and effective safe sex education including parental monitoring and contraceptive prevention is the important key that needs to start by the parents at home and reinforced continually at school and primary care office.