

Teenagers and use of contraceptives

Life



Teen pregnancy has been a great issue that has been widely discussed about and seen to increase in the United States. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy one-third of girls in the US get pregnant at least once by the age of 20 and most of the pregnancies are unplanned (2011). Teen pregnancies have been increasing due to the fact that teens are not using contraceptives to prevent any pregnancies and society does not do a good job on informing teens of the importance of contraceptives and protecting themselves when they engage in sexual activity, especially at a young age.

Psychological and socio-economical issues can also play a role in teen pregnancy, some girls decide to intentionally get pregnant because of their low self esteem, not having any goals for the future, having problems at home or even if their mother or sister were teen mothers. Teens should have more knowledge on protection and the importance of contraceptives because not only can it prevent pregnancies but also prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

As previously mentioned teen pregnancies are at a high once again and teens who engage in sexual activity do not use the proper forms of protection and society does not highlight the importance of birth control. Sarah Brown, CEO of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy stated that the magic formula for the decline of teen pregnancy is having less sex or using more contraceptives (PR Newswire). Most teens are unaware of the importance of having protected sex it can change their life dramatically. Half of all pregnancies in the US are unplanned--about three million each year (NCPTUP).

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Unplanned pregnancies result from unprotected sex; therefore, the use of birth control should be highly motivated in order to prevent any pregnancies. In their public opinion survey the NCPTUP concluded that 46% of teens wished young people were getting more information about abstinence and contraception. Rekha Daver, professor of gynecology at the Grant Medical School in JJ Hospital states that there needs to be more reproductive health education among children to teach them about safe sex and proper methods of contraception.

Teens should be taught at a younger age to think about their future and how being pregnant can transform and affect their whole life, as well as teaching them the value of safe sex and what can be taken to prevent unwanted pregnancies or abortions. More health education in schools should be emphasized to acknowledge students the risks of becoming teen parents and the importance of preventing pregnancies by the use of birth control. Teens should have easy access to these contraceptives in order to protect themselves during sexual intercourse and should not be ashamed to seek these resources since it is for their well-being.

The media can play a prominent figure in teen pregnancy and the use of contraceptives; it has its positives and negative outlooks on it. Many people are skeptical about TV series that are popular among adolescents because some believe that it teaches them to practice safe sex or not practice sex at all to prevent any unwanted pregnancies, but on the other hand some believe that it lionizes teen parents that are on shows like Teen Mom and it gives them a higher status since they are now popular and highly seen throughout the nation.

Some teens may want to follow their footsteps and believe that if they become teen parents they might also become recognized like the teen moms on the show. Another TV series that is very popular and seen among teens is *The Secret Life of an American Teenager*, it informs the audience how not using protection during sex can cause a serious life changing effect and becoming a teen parent is followed by many psychological, socio-economic and social issues such as becoming alienated from friends, not being able to financially sustain and care for a baby and believing that others think they are inferior now that they have had a baby.

In a poll conducted by the National Campaign to prevent pregnancies concluded that seven in ten young adults between the ages of 18-29 would support a campaign that would educate women and teens about all the birth control that can be accessed (2011). Many people support the use of the media to educate young teens the importance of protection and the wide range of birth control that can be used in order to prevent pregnancies, this will help decrease the high rate of teen pregnancies in the future. It also highlights the significance of using protection to prevent any further health risks such as sexually transmitted diseases.

Each year, approximately three million cases of sexually transmitted diseases occur among teenagers according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Not only does protection prevent pregnancies but it protects the health by preventing the transmission of sexual diseases among partners; according to the mentioned statistic, many teens are becoming victims of these diseases and most of the teens could have prevented this by using a condom, but most teens are not informed how to prevent these

diseases so it is very important for them to become educated on the topic in order to decrease the rate of sexually transmitted diseases.

Another factor that plays a prominent role in teen pregnancy and knowledge of birth control comes from the teen's psychological issues and how their parents raise them. Some teens may face difficult issues at home or at school and feel depressed and alone, some may have a low self-esteem and do not have a set goal for their future. Andrea Parrot, a Cornell women's health and human sexuality expert said that girls intentionally get pregnant because they do not see any life goals in their future other than becoming a mother.

She also mentions that teens do not have anything to strive for and have no one to look up to for admiration or affection so they believe that a baby may be a source to receive unconditional love. Parrot believes that more programs that would help young girls acquire skills to achieve life goals, increase their self esteem, relationship with family and education on sex and protection would dramatically decrease teen pregnancy; although, these programs should be more effective if it targets girls at an early age in order for them to be informed at a younger age and not commit these mistakes later on in their life.

The way the teen was raised also is important because teens who were raised in a single parent household are often left to learn life lessons and sex on their own or through peers, and a teen whose mother was a teen mother or whose sister was a teen parent as well, is more likely to become a teen parent themselves. Parents influence their children's decisions, so parents should inform their children more on safe sex and the importance of it.

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In a survey by The national Campaign states that 46% of teens say parents influence their decision about sex, eight in ten teens say it would be much easier for teens to delay sexual activity if they were able to openly talk to their parents about sex, and six in ten teens agree that they do not use contraceptives because they fear that their parents will find out. It is the parents' responsibility to inform their teens about safe sex and contraceptives in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies at an early age and prevent diseases.

Parents should be more open about the topic and feel comfortable to cover the issue with their children so their children can openly talk about sex with their parents. Teen pregnancy is a major issue in the US, psychological issues such as self esteem, sociological issues like relationship with peers and parents and social problems like society's role on informing teens on sex and birth control play a prominent role in teen pregnancies.

Informing teens at a younger age on the importance of safe sex and protection does not only decrease the rate of teen pregnancies but also decrease the rate of sexually transmitted diseases. Having a greater knowledge on sex education is the key factor for teens to make a dramatic decision in their lives to take precaution and think about their future before acting upon a simple consequence that can change their life such as not taking precaution.