

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR EARLY PREGNANCY AMONG FEMALE TEENAGERS IN ESURE, AKURE SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ONDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy has recently gained popularity due to its numerous negative effects on the overall health of the adolescent nursing mother, the child, the family, and the entire community. The study investigated factors responsible for early pregnancy among female teenagers in Esure, Akure South Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive design, administering 108 questionnaires for analysis using IBM SPSS Version 25. The findings revealed that 92.6% of the respondents are knowledgeable about teenage pregnancy; 86% have given birth; age at first sexual intercourse was highest between 17 – 19 years (44%); Primary causes of teenage pregnancy include a lack of sex education (70%), followed by peer pressure (35%), poverty (20%), and low self-esteem (19%). Other associated factors include a lack of self-control (28%), a lack of parenting (24%), and poverty (23%). The vulnerable groups include orphans (82.4%), children from single parents (74%), sexually active teenagers (92.6%), and gifts from the opposite sex (83.3%). The implications of teenage pregnancy include sexually transmitted infections (40%), abortion (23%), bleeding after birth (15%), death (14%), and infertility (8%). The study recommends the introduction of youth-friendly health services, continuous health education, and the incorporation of human sexuality education into school curricula. The study also advocates for government support in establishing youth counselling centres and providing resources for pregnant and parenting teenagers.

INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy poses a significant threat to public health in Nigeria, West Africa, and worldwide, with far-reaching consequences for both mothers and babies. Research has shown that adolescent pregnancy can lead to a range of complications, including anaemia, pre-eclampsia, preterm labour, and low birth weight (Etuk, 2020; Emmanuel, 2021; Lambonmung et al., 2022). Teenage mothers often face numerous challenges, including early marriage, family rejection, social isolation, and poor academic performance, which can lead to school dropout (Odiri & Anthonia, 2023). In southern Nigeria, the incidence of teenage pregnancy is a concern, with a reported rate of 1.95% and higher complication rates among mothers who do not receive proper prenatal care (Etuk, 2020).

According to the World Health Organisation (2020), 39% of girls in the least developed countries marry before 18, and 12% before 15. In Ondo State, Nigeria, female genital mutilation (FGM) is prevalent, with some believing it reduces promiscuity and enhances fertility (Taiwo, 2023). However, experts advocate for robust awareness campaigns and early education to eradicate this harmful practice (Taiwo, 2023).

AIM & OBJECTIVES

This study aims to investigate the factors responsible for early pregnancy among female teenagers in Esure Community, Akure South Local Government Area, Ondo State.

The study seeks to explore the perception of female teenagers on early pregnancy, identify the contributing factors, and propose strategies to minimise early pregnancy within the community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



Population and Sample

Study Instrument, Data
Collection & Analysis

Ethical Consideration

POPULATION AND SAMPLE



Population

This study was carried out among teenagers between the ages of 13 and 19 in the Esure community.

Sample

One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were used for this research in the Esure community, Akure South Local Government, Ondo State.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE & DATA ANALYSIS

Sampling Technique

This research used a simple random sampling technique, which gives each respondent an equal chance of selection.

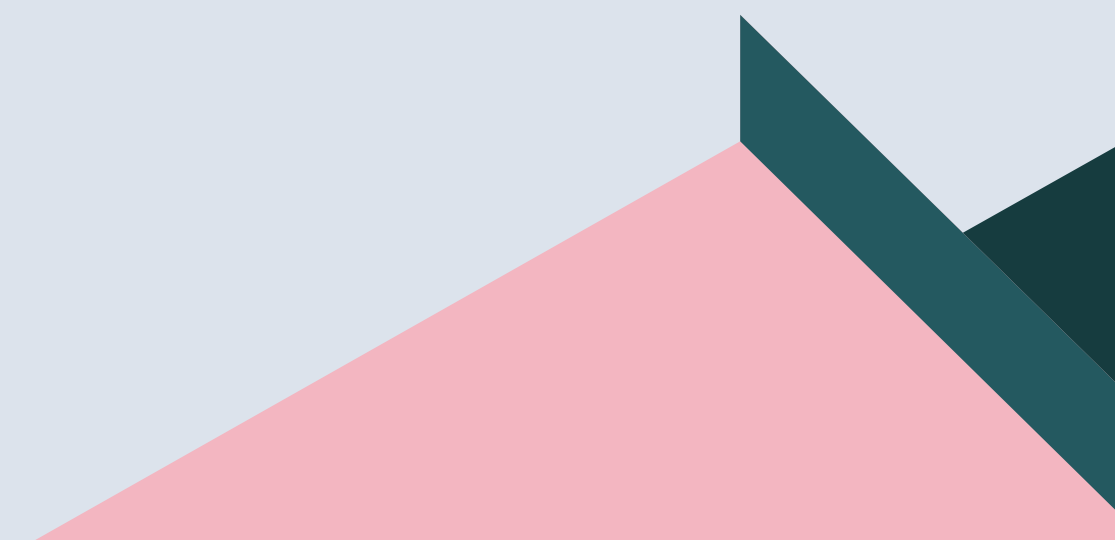
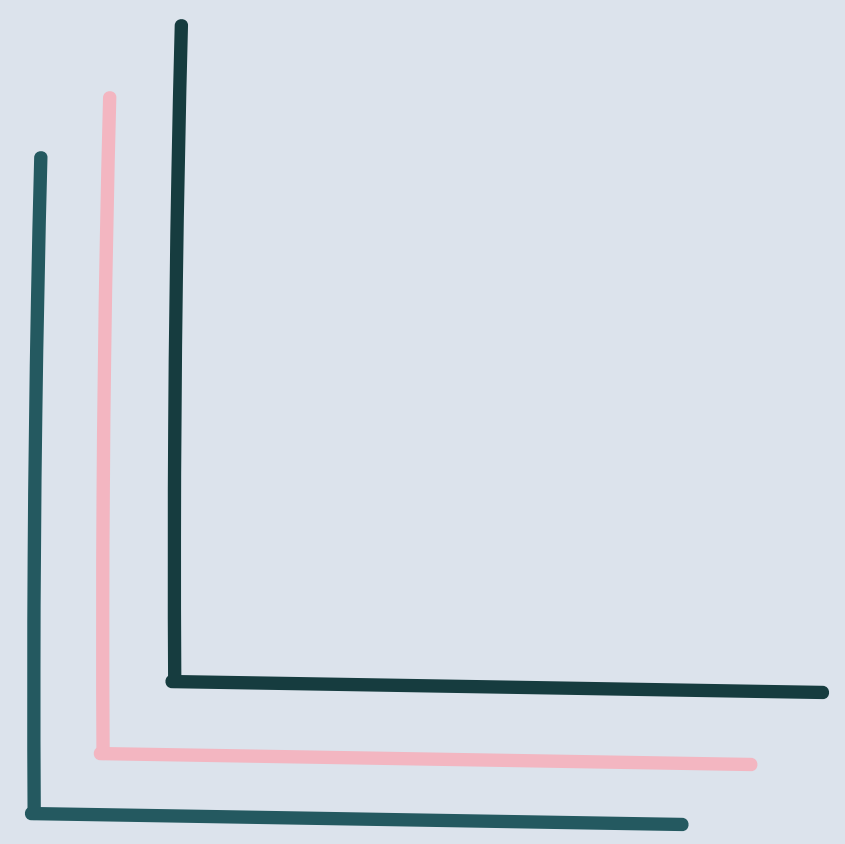
Study Instrument & Data Analysis

For this research, we developed a structured questionnaire with two sections to gather relevant and effective data from the respondents in the study area. We then compiled, organised, and analysed the collected quantitative data.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION



We sought informed consent from the head of the community and the respondents. We assured the respondents that their privacy would remain confidential.



FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

This research revealed that most respondents experienced their first sexual encounter between the ages of 17 and 19, with smaller percentage having sexual intercourse between the ages of 11 and 16. These findings are consistent with the studies of Emmanuel (2021) and the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020), which observed that adolescents typically initiate sexual activity between the ages of 15 and 19.

Regarding the respondents' understanding of teenage pregnancy, majority correctly identified it as pregnancy occurring in girls younger than 19, which aligns with Emmanuel (2021) definition. However, a small percentage of respondents held misconceptions, with few believing teenage pregnancy could occur at any age and few associating it with having multiple children.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY 2

The study also identified a lack of sex education as a primary cause of teenage pregnancy, with majority of the participants supporting this view, a finding that aligns with the research of Sulaiman et al. (2023). Additionally, some of the respondents held the misconception that early sexual activity benefits a girl's growth, while the majority disagreed with this notion.

Key factors contributing to teenage pregnancy identified in this study include peer pressure, family breakdown, low self-esteem, poverty, lack of sex education, and media influence. These factors are in agreement with findings from previous studies (Sulaiman et al., 2023; Simwanza et al., 2022), which highlighted similar social and economic pressures leading to early pregnancy.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY 3

In terms of preventive measures, some of the respondents recommended health education, the use of contraceptives, and some advocated for abstinence. These recommendations align with Martins et al. (2023), who emphasised the importance of comprehensive sex education and accessible contraceptive services in preventing teenage pregnancy.

The study also found that majority of the respondents believed orphans are particularly vulnerable to teenage pregnancy, while more than half identified children from single-parent households as at risk. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents acknowledged that sexually active teenagers are more vulnerable to pregnancy.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY 4

Majority of the respondents acknowledged the impact of gifts from men on teenage pregnancy, corroborating Taiwo (2023) findings that transactional relationships frequently result in early pregnancies. Additionally, more than half of the respondents agreed that cultural practices contribute to teenage pregnancy, consistent with Emmanuel (2021) findings on the role of cultural norms in early pregnancy.

Finally, the study highlighted the significant academic and health implications of teenage pregnancy. The majority of respondents believed that pregnant teenagers perform worse academically than their peers, a concern that aligns with findings from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NPC & ICF, 2018). Researchers identified health risks like anaemia, pre-eclampsia, and sexually transmitted infections as significant concerns (Etuk, 2020; WHO, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Recommendation

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significant public health issue posed by teenage pregnancy in Esure, Akure South Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria. The research highlights the complex interplay of factors contributing to early pregnancy among female teenagers, including inadequate sex education, socioeconomic challenges, peer pressure, and cultural influences.

The findings reveal that while a majority of teenagers are aware of the risks and implications of early pregnancy, misconceptions and gaps in knowledge persist, particularly concerning sexual health and the use of contraceptives.

CONCLUSION 2



To effectively address this issue, a multifaceted approach is required, one that combines comprehensive sex education, improved access to reproductive health services, and community support.

The insights gained from this study can inform policy development and program implementation aimed at safeguarding the health and future of adolescent girls in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

- ☐ Parental Involvement: Parents should actively provide for their children and serve as positive role models.
- ☐ Promotion of Abstinence: Stressing the value of abstinence and techniques for postponing sexual activity is important.

Recommendations

Sexuality Education at Home: Parents should educate their children on sexual health and maintain a close, communicative relationship with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS 2

Recommendations

Creating a Safe Home Environment: Parents should ensure that the home environment is protective and shields children from harmful influences.

Family Planning Education: Healthcare providers should encourage sexually active youth to use modern family planning methods, with a strong emphasis on correct and consistent condom use.

Recommendations

Youth-Friendly Health Services: To make health services more accessible and welcoming to young people, the government should introduce them.

Continuous Health Education: Young people should receive ongoing health education at various forums, especially during school health programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS 3

Recommendations

Integration of Sexuality Education in Schools: The government should include comprehensive sexual education in the school curriculum.

Establishment of Youth Counselling Centres: The government should establish counselling centres in cities and local government areas, offering teenagers access to advice on various issues, including sexual health.

Recommendations

Contraceptives Provision: The government should ensure that contraceptives are readily available for sexually active teenagers.

Funding for Sexual Education and Support Services: The government should allocate reasonable funding for the promotion of comprehensive sexual education and the provision of support services to pregnant and parenting teenagers.

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