

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AS A MENACE OF DROP-OUT FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IBADAN METROPOLIS: COUNSELLING INTERVENTION**BY****Akanni, Olurotimi O. (Ph. D): Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo; E-mail: rotex001@yahoo.com****&****Feyisetan, Christianah T.: Department of Special Needs Education, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo****Abstract**

This paper looked into teenage pregnancy as a menace of drop-out from secondary schools in Ibadan metropolis and also counseling intervention to curb the menace. Teenage pregnancy is rampant in our society nowadays because girl teenagers became pregnant between the ages of 13 and 19 years which is abnormal compared to the normal ages of married women. This study reviewed the concept of teenager, pregnancy, teenage pregnancy, causes of teenage pregnancy, influence of Girls teenage pregnancy on their dropout rate from secondary schools and counselling interventions. It was however discovered that factors such as: social media, peer pressure, absent parents, drugs and alcohol, low socio economic status amongst others causes the menace of Girl's teenage pregnancy which adversely leads to their drop-out from various secondary schools. Based on this premise, the following counselling interventions were made i.e the parents should monitor the development of their teenagers most especially their girl's teenager and also communicate the dangers of teenage pregnancy to them. The secondary schools managements should organize workshop or seminars for the teenagers on teenage pregnancy and it's implication on their academic performance.

Keywords: Teenager, Pregnancy, Teenage pregnancy, Drop-out, and Couselling

Introduction

The rate at which teenagers drop out of secondary school in Ibadan metropolis is alarming and it is a great concern for the education stakeholders because majority of these young girls finds it difficult to return to school after their delivery. This thus makes them to contribute nuisance into the society by engaging in different nepharious activities such as prostitution, robbery, hawking, begging, child trafficking amongst other nepharious activities. Pregnancy related school drop - outs have become a matter of public concern in the world today. Several studies have shown that age at first intercourse is reducing, suggesting that today's young adults are becoming sexually active at an increasingly younger ages. In addition, some studies have shown that few adolescents use contraceptives and are at risk of pregnancy (Chabra, 1991). This results in situations such as dropping out of school, poverty, early marriage and contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Briggs, 2001).

Oguguo (1996) refers to teenagers who have not reached legal adulthood who become pregnant. In most cases, school girls who become pregnant in countries like Nigeria, Mali and even Zambia either had to resort to unsafe abortions or they face official school expulsion. Because girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy usually never returned to school to complete their education after childbirth, their opportunities for socioeconomic advancement are limited. While in many settings, rules are currently being liberalized to provide for possibility of returning to school but the number of those returning back to school is still very low. This due to the fact that a pregnant school girl has to choose between dropping out of school and undergoing an abortion in order to remain in school, it poses a high cost associated with becoming pregnant while still in school. On the other hand, boys who get the girls pregnant do not face the same risks. Kinby (2001) revealed that teenage pregnancy is a major concern to world communities with the United State being at the top with almost one million teenage pregnancies each year.

Maynard (1996) believes that teenage pregnancy is a delinquent behaviour resulting from stress, dislike malice, boredom and unhappiness experienced by a teenage girl. Umeano (2003) opined that teenage sexual activities in Nigeria tend to be on the increase. The major consequence upon these increase sexual activities among teenagers is out of wedlock pregnancies that may result in abortion, child birth or even death. Kinby (2001) expressed that victims of teenage pregnancy lacked information or probably were not adequately educated on safe-sex ethics by their parents, schools or agencies that could have enabled them deal with friends who lure them into sex prematurely. Kinby (2001) stressed that the children of single parents are more vulnerable to teenage pregnancy. He also stated that exposure to sexual content on television, sexuality in the media, pornographic and sex chat rooms by teenagers could most likely turn them to engage in sexual activities (L'Engle et al, 2006; Park, 2008).

United Nation (2001) opined that acceptance of gift for sex and some adult deliberately taking advantage of poor teenage girls, encouraging them into having sex were also noted as factor responsible for teenage girls pregnancy. Yampolskaya, Brown and Greenbaum (2002) posited that approximately 60% of adolescents' mothers lives in poverty at the time of the birth of their babies and approximately 73% go on welfare within 5 years of giving birth, its associated motherhood sometimes end up the individuals dreams of achieving higher pursuits. Yampolskaya, (2002) expressed that demographic studies continue to report that in developed countries such as United States, Mexico Canada, Austria, teenage pregnancy results in lower educational attainment, increased rates of poverty and worse life outcomes for children of teenage mothers compared to children of young adult women.

Onuzulike (2002) have indicated poverty, pornography, mass media and peer influence as some of the factors responsible for teenage pregnancy. Research shows that the teen years are the most stressful and confusing times of life (Hoffman, 2006). Umeano (2003) revealed that many teenage girls engages in premarital sex which exposes them to the risk of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancies. Nwosu (2005) opined that there is a global increase in teenage pregnancies. She observed that more than 14 million adolescents give birth each year thus contributing roughly 10 percent of the world's total number of births. Ukekwe (2001) further noted that many of these babies are unwanted by their teens mothers. She further maintained that these babies suffer from starvation, sickness, homelessness and abandonment among other complications. Briggs (2001) identified several complications associated with teenage girls' pregnancy which includes: high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, malnutrition, vesico vagina fistula, recto vagina fistula and death. Ekwueme (2000) noted that about 400,000 unplanned births occur annually in Nigeria. Half of these births, she noted were to single girls between the ages to 15 and 19 years. She also observed that in thirty-one countries where data were available, fertility rates among women aged 15 to 19 years were high with an average of 164 live birth annually.

Audu (1997) remarked that over one million adolescent girls in Nigeria become pregnant every year. Whereas, approximately 400,000 are 17 years or younger. Hosie (2007) also found out that bullying by teachers or other students that were instrumental in their dislike of school. Those students whose attendance are poor and who dislike school prior to pregnancy have a negative attitude from their schools on disclosure of their condition and are less likely to remain in school than those who had good attendance beforehand (Gordon, 1993). The extensive literature review by Dilworth (2000) suggested that statistically, young mothers face a life of poverty, have lower levels of education and have less opportunity in the workplace than non-parenting teens. She found that research on teen pregnancy prevention usually focuses on the negative aspects of being a teen parent. It is also alleged that the relationship between teenage pregnancy and education goes in both directions. Teenagers who become pregnant are more likely to drop out of school and teenagers who drop out of school are more likely to become pregnant.

Most authors have linked poverty to teenage pregnancy and its subsequent motherhood. They see poverty as a cause at the same time an effect of teenage pregnancy. For instance, Keller, Hilton & Twumasi-Ankrah (1999) opined that in rural communities, family financial exigencies and social custom induce girls to stay out of school and enter into early sexual relationships which lead them into getting pregnant at early stages of their lives thereby making them continue to be in the cycle of poverty. This presupposes that tackling teenage pregnancy would have a trickling down effects on poverty and vice-versa.

Concept of Teenager

Skyles (2000) defined pregnancy as the condition of carrying a developing offspring in the uterus. Gordon (1983) defined pregnancy as a condition in which female carries in her womb, the young before it is born. Onuzulike (2002) described that teen years as a bridge between life as a child and life as an adult which gives the individual opportunities to drop childhood behaviours and learn the adult lifestyle. Negi (1999) described this period as the second decade of life. WHO (1997) opined that it is the period between 10 and 19 years when the secondary sex characteristics appear. Although, teenage is often used interchangeably with adolescents.

Boongart and Cohen (1998) described the teen years as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood characterized by heightened social awareness and accelerated physical growth. It is the period that marks onset of puberty. Ukekwe (2001) described teenage as the most important period in human life which if not properly handled could lead to the most disastrous consequences in later life, especially among females.

Concept of Teenage Pregnancy

Skyles (2000) defined pregnancy as the condition of carrying a developing offspring in the uterus. Gordon (1983) defined pregnancy as a condition in which female carries in her womb, the young before it is born. Teenage pregnancy is defined as females between the ages of 13 – 15 who engage in sexual activity and become pregnant either intentionally or unintentionally. Mainly times, these teens are regarded as selfish, apathetic and immoral by the general population regardless of the teens intention of getting pregnant. Teenage pregnancy refers to female adolescents becoming pregnant between the ages of 13 – 19. These young females have not yet reached adulthood and the causes of teenage pregnancy vary greatly. Teenage pregnancy may be linked to things such as lack of education and information about reproduction, peer pressure and early engagement of sexual activity. Although some teenage pregnancies are intentional, the majority of them are unintentional and lead to many negative outcomes for the teenage mother, the child as well as other family and peers. Teenage mothers generally do not have the resources to care for a child and often they are not able to sustain healthy habits throughout pregnancy to ensure they produce a healthy baby. These young females often do not complete their education and they begin a perpetual cycle in which their child may further go on to become a teenage parent as well.

Causes of Teenage Pregnancy

The following are the causes of teenage pregnancy:

Drugs and Alcohol Consumption: During adolescence, teenagers may drink and experiment with drugs frequently with their friends at social gatherings and parties. Teens, however, do not realize the impacts alcohol and drugs have on the functioning of their brain, especially the effects of binge drinking which is consuming large amounts of alcohol during one sitting. Drinking excessively as well as experimenting drugs may lead to unwanted and unintentional pregnancy. These substances greatly affect a teens ability to logically think and carry out general thinking processes, thus increases the chances they will engage in unprotected and unsafe sexual activity (Skyle, 2000).

Low Socio-economic Status: Teens that become pregnant often come from families of low socio-economic status. Growing up, these children often come from families who are suffering from poverty and do not have all the necessary resources to raise their child. These children grow up to have low educational goals and successes because of the lack of involvement from their own parents. These young

kids then predisposed to a negative environment end up with less ambition to succeed in school and begin making friendships with other teens who are going through similar situations. It is these groups of teens who begin to experiment with drugs and alcohol and do not do very well in school and ends up in teenage pregnancy.

Peer Pressure and Sexual Abuse: Peer pressure may also be prevalent in a different form while in relationships adolescents may be pressured by their partner to have unsafe and unprotected sex in order to express their “love” and “true feelings” for their partner. The partner may manipulate the other to have unprotected sex which leads to unintended pregnancy.

School Environment: Mensch et. al (2001) opined that girls who attended schools where girls felt they received equal treatment with boys were less likely to have engaged in sex than those who attended schools where fewer girls reported equal treatment. It thus appears that school environment is also a factor affecting the likelihood that a girl will be at risk of pregnancy. The great majority of sexually active girls do not want to become pregnant. Teenage pregnancy can usually be attributed to abundance of sexual mythology that they have learned from their peers and lack of factual information that they have received from their parents. This causes them to believe that their sexual practices are safe and will not result in pregnancy.

Media Influence: The media has a large effect on teen pregnancy, especially shows as “Teen Mom” and “16 and Pregnant”. These shows often glamorize pregnancy and hide the true hardships associated with pregnancy which encourages these teens to become pregnant. Some teenage females become pregnant just so they are able to drop out of high school or to force their partners into a deeper commitment. These televisions glorify the idea of having a child through the promotion of these teenagers having a more adult lifestyle, with more responsibility and decision-making power. Rebellion is also another reason why some teens will become pregnant. In order to show their independence and having more control over their lives, a teen may decide to have a child.

Conclusion

It was discovered from this research that teenage pregnancy is detrimental to the academic performance of the girl’s teenagers which adversely leads to their drop out from secondary schools. Girl’s teenage pregnancy is also hazardous to their health because many of their internal organs, most especially uterus are not riped to carry foetus which may affects the teenage mother as well as their child negatively. Although, it was noted that variables like media, peer pressure, sexual rape amongst others contributed to the early pregnancy of teenagers.

Suggestions

The following counselling interventions are made to reduce the menace of teenage pregnancy in secondary schools:

1. The parents or guardian should monitor the developmental processes of their teenagers and also communicate to them about the characteristics of a teenager as well as the reason why they should avoid early sexual intercourse .
2. The religious leaders should preach to their teenagers on the dangers attached to sexual intercourse before marriage.
3. The school management should organize workshop/ seminar for the secondary school teachers on the reasons for abstaining from sexual intercourse.
4. The parents should critically assess what their teenagers will watch on social media.
5. The parents are counselled to provide the necessary things for their teenagers. i.e. Food, clothing, shelter, security amongst others.
6. The government should make the education of teenage girls free or subsidize their school fees so as to improve their enrolment.
7. The parents should not be too harsh or lenient but rather make themselves available for their teenagers so as to be able to confide in them whenever there is pressure from peers.

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