

# The Impact of Teenage Pregnancy on Public Health in Okposi Community, Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State

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## Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and its implications for public health in Okposi Community within the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. Employing a descriptive study design, the research population was determined to be 12,824 individuals, with a sample size of 321 calculated at 2.5% of the population. Data collection utilized a self-structured questionnaire, administered through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Of the 321 distributed questionnaires, 310 were retrieved and analyzed using simple percentage. Key findings revealed that prevalent contemporary issues associated with teenage pregnancy included a lack of sex education (91.29%), parental absence from home (95.81%), peer pressure (89.35%), low socio-economic status (69.68%), and negative media influences (68.39%), among others. Consequences of teenage pregnancy identified by respondents encompassed pregnancy-related complications (86.45%), inadequate care/love for the born child (91.61%), increased school dropout rates (89.68%), and diminished family moral values (93.87%). Respondents offered various solutions to address teenage pregnancy, including the provision of adequate employment opportunities (83.55%), implementation of comprehensive sex education in both school and home settings (97.77%), ensuring access to affordable housing for the community (78.39%), and the establishment of social security programs (69.35%). Additionally, it was suggested that fostering positive mother-child relationships could facilitate adequate communication, while parents should remain vigilant in monitoring their teenagers' social circles and friendships.

**Keywords:** Teenage; Pregnancy; Implications; Public Health; Okposi Community.

## Introduction

Teenage pregnancy, recognized as one of the most pressing public health issues of the 21st century, continues to pose a significant challenge worldwide (United Nations Fund for Population Activities, UNFPA, 2013). Alabi and Oni (2017) describe teenage pregnancy as a serious problem affecting under-aged girls typically between 13 and 19 years old, which has deeply affected contemporary societies. This social issue, commonly referred to as "teenage pregnancy," pertains to pregnancies occurring in women who have not reached legal adulthood. Definitions of teenage pregnancy often

include pregnancies in human females under the age of 20 at the time the pregnancy ends (Hamilton & Ventura, 2012), or pregnancies occurring during the ages of 13-19 years old (Undiyaundeye, 2012).

Teenage pregnancy is a global concern due to its association with early sexual activity and the resulting unplanned and unintended pregnancies, which pose risks and challenges related to early motherhood, education, and reproductive health (Undiyaundeye, Agba, & Mandeun, 2015). Lack of access to information on sexuality and reproduction further exacerbates this issue, with approximately 75 percent of the world's population under 15 having no access to such information (Public Health Nigeria, 2017).

In 2014, the World Health Organization reported that 11% of all births worldwide were from women aged 15-19 years, totaling an estimated 16 million women globally (WHO, 2014a). Despite a decline in the teen birth rate in recent years, the United States still maintains one of the highest rates among developed countries, with disparities observed among different racial and ethnic groups (CDC, 2018a).

The prevalence of teenage pregnancy is particularly high in developing countries, with Sub-Saharan Africa experiencing the highest rates globally (UNFPA, 2013; Clifton & Hervish, 2013). Nigeria, in particular, faces significant challenges in addressing teenage pregnancy, with poverty, peer pressure, inadequate sex education, and cultural factors contributing to its occurrence (Alabi & Oni, 2017; Ogori, Ajeya, & Yunusa, 2013).

Teenage pregnancy has profound social and health implications, including school dropout, inadequate prenatal care, and increased maternal and infant mortality rates (Public Health Nigeria, 2017). Efforts to address this issue require comprehensive strategies that encompass education, access to reproductive health services, and community engagement (UNFPA, 2013; WHO, 2014b).

In conclusion, teenage pregnancy remains a complex and multifaceted issue with significant implications for public health and society at large. Addressing this challenge requires coordinated efforts at the individual, community, and policy levels to promote sexual education, empower young people, and provide support for pregnant teenagers and their families.

### **Specific Objectives**

These are:

1. Investigate the current factors associated with teenage pregnancy in Okposi Community.
2. Determine the effects of teenage pregnancy within the Okposi Community.
3. Identify solutions to enhance teenage pregnancy prevention strategies tailored to the specific requirements of Okposi Community.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide this study.

1. What are the current challenges and factors contributing to teenage pregnancy in Okposi Community?
2. What are the impacts and outcomes of teenage pregnancy within the Okposi Community?
3. What measures can be implemented to enhance teenage pregnancy prevention efforts specifically tailored to Okposi Community?

## **Methodology**

The research took place in Okposi Community, situated within the Ogba/Ebema/Ndoni Government Area of Rivers State. Geographically, Okposi Community is positioned at latitude 25°18' N, 30°28', and longitude 17°40' E, 22°44' E. It shares its borders with Kriegani Community to the West, Elieta Community to the East, Ogbidi Community to the South, and Omoku town to the North.

The residents of Okposi Community are primarily involved in agricultural, commercial, industrial, and civil service activities.

## **Research Design**

The research employed a descriptive survey methodology. It took place from February to March 2022 and aimed to examine teenage pregnancy and its impact on public health in Okposi Community within the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

## **Study Population**

The study population consists of 3,100 individuals, comprising all female teenagers aged between 10 and 19 years residing in Okposi Community, Onelga, Rivers State, totaling 500 individuals.

## **Sampling Size/Sampling Technique**

A total of 310 individuals were selected as the sample size for the evaluation of teenage pregnancy and its effects on public health in Okposi Community, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. This sample size represents 10% of the study population, as outlined below.;

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sample size; } n &= 10/100 \times 3100 \\ n &= 310 \end{aligned}$$

## **Instrument for Data Collection**

A Simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants.

The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire. (Fixed - response type close – ended questionnaire).

## **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher distributed 83 copies of the questionnaire directly (face-to-face) to all the participants. Completed questionnaires were collected on the spot after their completion.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, version 20.0. Frequency tables and simple percentages were employed for data analysis.

### Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained approval from the ethics committee of the Department of Public Health at Rivers State College of Health Science and Management Technology in Port Harcourt, which authorized the research to be conducted in the study area.

### Result and Discussion

Tables 1 to 3 present the findings corresponding to research questions 1 to 3, respectively, thereby addressing specific objectives 1 to 3. In Table 1, various contemporary factors related to teenage pregnancy were examined. The results indicate that parental absence from home (95.81%), lack of sex education (91.29%), peer pressure (89.35%), and sexual abuse or rape (70.97%) were among the most prominent issues identified. However, a considerable percentage of respondents (63.23% and 60.97%) did not perceive curiosity about sexual matters and cultural influences as significant factors contributing to teenage pregnancy. Conversely, the influence of media promoting undesirable behaviors (68.39%) was increasingly recognized as a contributing factor to teen pregnancy.

**Table 1.** Contemporary factors contributing to teenage pregnancy in Okposi Community.

| Variable                           | Response (Percentage, %) |             |           |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|
|                                    | Yes (%)                  | No (%)      | Total (%) |
| Lack of sex education              | 283 (91.29)              | 27 (8.71)   | 310 (100) |
| Low socio-economic status/poverty  | 216 (69.68)              | 94 (30.32)  | 310 (100) |
| Parents' absence from home         | 297 (95.81)              | 13 (4.19)   | 310 (100) |
| Unstable home                      | 199 (64.19)              | 111 (35.81) | 310 (100) |
| Sexual abuse/rape                  | 220 (70.97)              | 90 (29.03)  | 310 (100) |
| Curiosity on any matters           | 114 (36.77)              | 196 (63.23) | 310 (100) |
| Extreme peer pressure              | 277 (89.35)              | 33 (10.65)  | 310 (100) |
| Dictates of culture                | 121 (39.03)              | 189 (60.97) | 310 (100) |
| Media promoting untoward influence | 212 (68.39)              | 196 (63.23) | 310 (100) |

Table 2 outlined the consequences of teenage pregnancy in Okposi Community. The repercussions included reduced family moral values (93.87%), insufficient care or

love for the born child (91.61%), heightened dropout rates from school (89.68%), and complications arising from pregnancy (86.45%).

**Table 2.** Consequences of teen pregnancy in Okposi Community

| Variable                            | Response (Percentage, %) |             |           |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|
|                                     | Yes (%)                  | No (%)      | Total (%) |
| Associated pregnancy complications  | 268 (86.45)              | 42 (13.55)  | 310 (100) |
| Possible resultant death            | 195 (62.90)              | 115 (37.10) | 310 (100) |
| Likely malnutrition                 | 209 (67.42)              | 101 (32.58) | 310 (100) |
| Inadequate care/love for born child | 284 (91.61)              | 26 (8.39)   | 310 (100) |
| Reduced family moral value          | 291 (93.87)              | 19 (6.13)   | 310 (100) |
| Increased dropout from school       | 278 (89.68)              | 32 (10.32)  | 310 (100) |

Table 3 outlined the proposed preventive measures against teenage pregnancy in Okposi Community as suggested by the respondents. Among these measures were the implementation of comprehensive sex education in both schools and homes (96.77%), the provision of sufficient employment opportunities (83.55%), ensuring access to adequate and affordable housing for the community (78.39%), and the establishment of social security measures (69.35%). However, the respondents from Okposi Community did not believe that "discouraging teenage marriage" (60.97%) could effectively address the issue of teenage pregnancy.

**Table 3.** Suggested preventive measures against teenage pregnancy in Okposi Community by the respondents

| Variable   | Response (Percentage, %) |             |           |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|
|  | Yes (%)                  | No (%)      | Total (%) |
| Provision of adequate employment   | 259 (83.55)              | 51 (16.45)  | 310 (100) |
| Applying sex education in both school and at home                        | 300 (96.77)              | 10 (3.23)   | 310 (100) |
| Discouraging teenage marriage  | 121 (39.03)              | 189 (60.97) | 310 (100) |
| Providing social security  | 215 (69.35)              | 95 (30.65)  | 310 (100) |
| Ensuring amenities in / Adequate and affordable housing for the Populace | 186 (60.00)              | 124 (40.00) | 310 (100) |
|  | 243 (78.39)              | 67 (21.61)  | 310 (100) |

### Discussion of Findings

The study findings revealed that factors such as parents' absence from home (95.81%), lack of sex education (91.29%), and peer pressure (89.35%) are prominent issues influencing teenage pregnancy in the semi-urban Okposi Community. This aligns with Qolesa's (2017) findings, which identified various factors at individual, social, and

structural levels contributing to early sexual initiation and subsequent teenage pregnancy.

Furthermore, the consequences of teenage pregnancy observed in Okposi Community over recent years include diminished family values (93.87%), inadequate care and affection for the offspring (91.61%), and increased school dropout rates (89.68%). These findings resonate with Odimegwu and Mkwanzani's (2016) research, which highlighted associations between teenage pregnancy and family disruption, high levels of female unemployment, and poverty.

Residents of Okposi also proposed solutions to address teenage pregnancy, including the implementation of comprehensive sex education in schools and at home (96.77%), the provision of sufficient employment opportunities (83.55%), ensuring access to adequate and affordable housing for the population (78.39%), and establishing social security measures (69.35%). These measures are expected to mitigate the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the community. Various authorities in Africa have also undertaken initiatives to combat teenage pregnancy, yielding some positive outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

Teenage pregnancy represents a significant contemporary societal challenge, often stemming from inadequate parental, educational, and governmental efforts to promote abstinence from sexual activity. The repercussions of teenage pregnancy are far-reaching and include educational disruption, strained relationships, financial instability, homelessness, and increased susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections for both the adolescent and the child.

The ramifications extend beyond the teenage mothers and their offspring, impacting family dynamics, pregnancy complications, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment within the broader community. Comprehensive sex education, particularly at the foundational level, plays a crucial role in preventing unintended pregnancies among adolescents. It's worth emphasizing that comprehensive sex education significantly reduces the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies among young women.

While various methods exist to prevent teenage pregnancy, abstinence remains the most effective approach, offering the assurance of no pregnancy risk and protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Authorities should develop effective strategies for disseminating information about the adverse outcomes of teenage pregnancy to deter younger generations from engaging in risky behaviors.
2. Parents should closely monitor the activities and social circles of their children aged 9-12 years, as well as teenagers, to ensure they are not exposed to harmful influences.

3. Comprehensive sex education programs should be implemented for children aged 9-12 years and teenagers to educate them about the consequences of teenage pregnancy.
4. Promoting positive mother-child relationships is essential for fostering open communication and trust between parents and their children.
5. Mothers should regularly engage in discussions with their teenage daughters about sexuality, including puberty changes, to provide them with essential information and guidance.
6. Encouraging older teenagers to act as mentors for younger peers can provide valuable support and guidance in navigating issues related to sexuality and pregnancy prevention.
7. Parents and teachers must be candid and straightforward when discussing the consequences of premarital sex with teenagers, ensuring they understand the risks associated with such behaviors.

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