Teenage Pregnancy and Its Effect on the Girl Child in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
This work is on teenage pregnancy and it’s Effect on the Girl Child in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Two research questions guided the work. The findings of the study revealed that some of the girls are at risk of contracting HIV/AIDs and subsequent death from abortion. It was recommended therefore that parents should educate their teenagers on sex, create time for their children. Sex education should be taught in schools as well as in churches while public enlightenment campaigns are mounted regularly.

Keywords: Teenage pregnancy, girl child

INTRODUCTION
Teenage pregnancy is formally defined as a pregnancy in a young woman who has not reached 20 year of age when the pregnancy ends, regardless of whether the woman is married or is legally an adult. Age 14 To 21, depending on the country (Mathew,2005). The term teenage pregnancy is used because it refers to those who get pregnant before reaching legal adulthood ie those between the age of 13-19 years.

There are growing numbers of teenage mothers all over the world. These teenage mothers are mostly school drop outs. In many cases, the teenage girls are either too shy to ask their partners to use condoms or are not willing to say no to their partners despite not willing to indulge in such activities.

Therefore, from the above, does it mean that young girls lack education on safer sex or do not have proper knowledge on contraceptive method? or are forced into early marriage? or do have sex due to pressure from boy friend? I wonder what might be the main reason (Arkutu, 2006).

Moreover, women constitute 2/3rd of the world population and if proper care is not taken to streamline teenage pregnancy which leads to obstetric complication resulting in high mortality and morbidity rate, one wonders what the population of the nation especially in Degema Local Government Area might be in future (Akinsola, 2002).
Purpose of the Study
1. To identify the factors contributing to teenage pregnancy in Degema Local Government Area.
2. To examine the effects of teenage pregnancy on girl-child

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
The descriptive design was used.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS
Research question 1: What are the factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 1: Percentage responses of the factors contributing to teenage pregnancy in Degema Local Government Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Frequency (F)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental guidance</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation by older men</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor family background</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer group influence</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows some of the causes of teenage pregnancy. The result revealed that 40 (21%) of the respondent said lack of parental guidance cause teenage pregnancy, 20 (11%) exploitation by older men, 70 (39%) said poor family background, while 50 (29%) said peer group influence are some of the factors contributing to teenage frequency in Degema Local Government Area.

Research question 2: What are the effects of teenage pregnancy on the girl-child?

Table 2: Percentage responses of the respondents on effects of teenage pregnancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency (F)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School dropout</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early motherhood</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infertility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death from abortion</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 2: above, identified effects of teenage pregnancy revealed that 60 (36%) of respondent said abortion, 50 (25%) school dropout, 40 (21.4%), early motherhood, 5 (3.6%), infertility, while 25 (14.3%) disagreed that death from abortion are the effect of teenage pregnancy on the girl-child.

DISCUSSION
According to my findings, factors contributing to teenage pregnancy include lack of parental guidance. Parents are not so involved in the discussion or do not tell their children about negative effects of teenage pregnancy. Poor family background is the highest on the table which means that the family background has a great role to play in educating and protecting their children from getting pregnant. When a family is very poor and lacks the basic amenities needed for the teenagers, it will greatly affect the child and can also make her to look for means to get all her basic needs. Robinson (2008) agrees with the statement. To Abraham (2008), abortion which is 36% from the table has the highest percentage of the effect of teenager’s pregnancy among...
teenagers. Mathew (2005) also enlisted abortion as one of the effects of teenage pregnancy among teenage and this can lead to the death of the girl child. Gutt (2009) agreed that abstinence (which is 46.4% is the highest and shows that the best sex education programmes that can be given to the girl child are abstinence). The Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) also attested to this statement

Summary of the Study
The study examined the factors contributing to teenage pregnancy the age of teenagers’ sexual activity, sex education, awareness and utilization of family planning service, effects of teenage pregnancy and its prevention.

It was revealed that the factors contributing to teenage pregnancy include exploitation by older men while peer group influence is the highest. Abortion is rated the highest, based on the fact that the friends of the teenager have so much influence in their decision making.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, proper education of the parents on the importance of early sex education, good parental guidance, girl child education will help to reduce teenage pregnancy. Also, education of the teenagers by the nurse and other health personnel on abstinence, use of family planning will help prevent teenage pregnancy.  

Enlightenment campaign and awareness by the government will also help to prevent teenage pregnancy. Enrollment of the teenagers into educational programmes can also help to prevent teenage pregnancies

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Parents should educate their teenagers on sex, and should create time for their children
2. Mass education of teenagers should be done in the school, highlighting the effects of getting pregnant as a teenager.
3. Fliers on the effects of teenage pregnancy should be provided regularly for the teenagers in order to increase awareness.
4. Health workers in the communities should mount intensive mobilization campaign to encourage women to participate in health programme.
5. Counseling units should be created in the schools, religious organizations and the communities in order to counsel teenagers on the effects of teenage pregnancy.
6. Parents should make available the needs of these teenagers in order to keep their attention away from men who pacify them with money.
7. Some cultures and traditions that support early sexual activities and early marriage should be reviewed.
8. Sex education should be taught in schools as well as in churches.

REFERENCES


Pickett, L. (2001). Adolescence values system preferred resolution strategies and conflict with parents (2nd ed) Australia, Gailand, publishing Inc.

