

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Unintended Pregnancy among Unmarried Adolescents and Young Women in Anambra State, South East Nigeria

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Abstract

This study identified the characteristics and factors influencing unintended pregnancy among unmarried young women in a rural community in south-east Nigeria. One hundred and thirty six unmarried teens with unintended pregnancy attending a Christian hospital in Ozubulu, a rural community in south-east Nigeria, from January 1998 to December 2001 were included in the study. Information was obtained using a semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interview. Over 75% of the girls had their first sexual intercourse by 19 years, and over 69% had multiple partners. Over 95% had sex for economic reasons and exchanged sex for money or gifts. Only 13.5% ever used condoms. Ninety seven per cent suffered violence such as beating and verbal abuse from family members because of the pregnancy. Most of the adolescents or young women experienced major stressors, most importantly school and job termination, partner's negative attitude, religious sanction, discrimination and stigmatisation as a result of the unintended pregnancy. Unmarried pregnant adolescents or young women have particular health and psychosocial problems. Stakeholders in adolescent health, namely, parents, teachers, religious groups and health care providers, should recognise these problems and advocate for the provision of appropriate care and youth-friendly services to help youths navigate through these problems. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2004; 8[3]: 92-102)

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