

FACTORS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL BIOLOGY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF AWKA EDUCATION ZONE

by

Oguaju, Bridget Nwamaka (MPH)
Department of Health and Physical Education
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe-Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study was a descriptive of factors associated with teenage pregnancy among secondary school biology students and its implications for teaching. It was carried out in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State (Nigeria). The population comprised of 5000 biology students in 60 secondary schools. Purposive sampling based on convenience was used to draw a sample size of 359 students (250 from monogamous homes and 101 from polygamous homes). Two research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated and addressed. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire (instrument) was face validated by three (3) veteran researchers in biology teacher education. It was also pilot-tested for reliability using test-retest technique. Calculation of Pearson Product Moment Co-efficient of Reliability (r) gave a value of 0.98 for which the researchers adopted the instrument as reliable. Arithmetic mean with decision point of 3.00 was taken, t-test tested at .05 level of significance ($p > .05$) was used to test the null hypothesis. The results of the study revealed that teenage girls from monogamous and polygamous homes significantly differ in their mean perception of the factors of teenage pregnancy in Awka Education Zone. Recommendations were offered which include intensive biology teaching with instructions in sexuality education and inculcation of good moral character in the biology students by parents, teachers and all who are concerned with child training and development. Conclusion of the research is that all seven factors investigated are of teenage pregnancy in the perception of secondary school biology students of both monogamous and polygamous homes.

Keywords: Biology Students, Teenage, Teenage Pregnancy, Secondary School.

Introduction

Biology students are of enormous importance for national development. This is because great importance and benefits of biology as both a pure science and applied science abound. As pure science, the biology curriculum provides knowledge about the

living things, plants and animals (Chikobi, 2006). As applied science biology is a live-wire of many professional disciplines and careers, this includes medicine and medical sciences pharmacy and pharmacology, agriculture and agricultural sciences, nutrition, bio technology among others. In

any case, optimal contribution of biology students to national development as a result of significance of biology demands unreserved moral character of the students (Chikobi & Ezumezu, 2002). It is regrettable that most often the biology students fall victims of immoral character like illicit sex and sexual act which many at time manifest in teenage pregnancy. Also, some adolescent though married get pregnant before the age of 20. Some of the biology students come from polygamous homes while some come from a monogamous home. These variables in themselves may or may not influence the adolescent in one way or the other to teenage pregnancy.

Teenage pregnancy is pregnancy that arises between the ages of 10 and 20 years whether married or unmarried. Both teenage and adolescence are interwoven, but the later deals more on the physiological development during teenage period. (Oguaju, 2006). Oguaju (2008) observed that teenage pregnancies refer to all pregnancies occurring in females who have not attained the age of 20 years whether they are married or not. Many statistics on adolescence are reported on the age 10-19 while others cover 15-24, but neither range is intended to mark a universal beginning and ending either socially or biologically. Puberty marks the biologic growth of adolescence, but markers of its completion are various and not well defined (Population Report, 1995). Traditionally adolescent years are used interchangeably with the word teen years and the people belonging to this group are usually called teenagers.

Pregnancy during adolescence is multiethnic, sociological problem that cuts across all socio-economic, ethics, cultural and geographical boundaries (Hollingsworth; 1986; Ossiboateng, 1997). Teenage pregnancy is not only a current

pressure but also is a challenging public health problem. About one fifth of the world population-over one billion people is between the ages of 10 and 19 years. 15million women under the ages of 20 years give birth yearly, which amount to about 20% of all births world-wide.

England and Wales according to Oguaju (2006) recorded a rise in conception in girls aged under 16 in 1996, for the two consecutive years. In 1996, the conception rate was 9.4per 1000 girls aged 13-15, a rise of 11% compared with the 1995 rate of 8.4 conceptions per 1000 girls aged 13-15 teenagers who had begun childbearing was 28.3%, and the percentage of births that occurred within the age of 15-19 was 60.9%. The situation is not much different in Nigeria especially in the Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Teenage pregnancies even where desired are associated with many complications for both the mother and the child. Morbidity and mortality risks are greater for teenage mothers aged 20 years or less. In Tanzania, a survey found that antenatal complications were much higher in a group of first time mothers aged 15 and under, than for women aged 20-28. These complications include anaemia in pregnancy (from malaria haemolysis and poor nutrition), spontaneous abortions, labour, obstetric, hemorrhage, pre-elampsia/elampsia, and fetomaternal disproportion predisposed to difficult labour and obstruction and subsequent formation of vessico-vaginal fistulae. (Chikobi 2006).

Conditions abound that tend to act as factors influencing the incidence of teenage pregnancy. Such issues as concerned the following:

Early Sexual Debut: Early sexual debut can expose the teenagers to early sexual intercourse which will lead to teenage

pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy has been noted to be all pregnancies occurring in females who have not attained the age of 20 years whether they are married or not (Wikipedia, 2011). Most of the teenagers are not aware of their maturity, their menstrual cycle and their ovulating period. They only explore themselves in sex matters which will bring about teenage pregnancy.

The teenagers in secondary schools have no easy access to contraceptive facilities. As a result of their exposure to sexual intercourse with no knowledge of the facilities, teenage pregnancy occurs. (Oguaju, 2006). Many of the teenagers are not knowledgeable of the drugs used to prevent pregnancy. They only involve themselves in sexual exploration with little knowledge of sex styles and preventive drug methods, only to see themselves in having teenage pregnancy. (Nwankwo, 2011). Ezedum, (2000) confirmed in a study in Anambra State of Nigeria that age at heterosexual debut in 12 years and below, more so, they keep multiple partners with some selling sex while others buy sex.

Early Marriage: A teenager who married early has the tendency to conceive early which brings about teenage pregnancy. Premarital intercourse is beginning at younger ages and the actual incidence of premarital intercourse is increasing for teenagers leading to teenage pregnancy (Mckenery, Walter and Johnson, 2013). This is because a teenager who is exposed to early marriage is exposed to early sexual activities with the husband hence the teenager has been betrothed to the man, she has no veto power to reject the sexual intercourse with him.

The parents who betrothed the teenage girl to her husband may not inform the bridegroom not to have sexual intercourse

with the bride at such early age. Even when parents' agreement with the bridegroom to allow the teenage girl to finish up with the schooling before engaging in responsible motherhood, the bridegroom at times default (Chikeobi, 2015). At the same time the teenage girl herself can get out of love and companionship with the husband which lead to sexual intercourse with the husband which lead to teenage pregnancy. Ezumazu, (2015) emphasized that girls raised in affectionate homes appreciate love and companionship.

Environment: Teenagers are affected by their environment. A teenager who was brought up in rural environment where cultural belief does not condemn teenage pregnancy may think it wise to see herself a victim of teenage pregnancy without being aware of its implications. Johnson, (2014) stated that quite often adolescents take emotional risks as well as risks related to pregnancy and STIS/HIV/AIDs often subject to peer influence, they engage in indiscriminate sexual activities.

At the same time, a teenager who is brought up in urban environment where information and means of communication are available can get information and exposure that can lead her involvement to sexual activities that lead her to teenage pregnancy. Home environment that is not conducive to teenagers may lead a teenager to look for a conducive atmosphere which may be provided in exchange to sexual intercourse that leads to teenage pregnancy. A teenager who lives in an immoral home environment has her behaviour being influenced by the circumstances of the environment. If the home has no sanity and fear of God the teenager may think life is just like that and may end up in teenage pregnancy. Marlow, (2005), opinion that girls who were raised in unaffectionate

homes may want to become pregnant in order to have a child to love.

School environment is another forum where teenagers group themselves and are governed by a common norms and behaviour which might be positive or negative. In case of negative behaviour in which some of the teenage girls involve themselves in prostitution, some end up in teenage pregnancy. Burbwa (2011) citing Coleman and Hendry (2012) stated that withal heterosexual behaviours are the sexual behaviours most adolescents experiment on because they are the most heterosexually active age cohort the world over.

Social Deprivation: Some of the teenagers who have no body either parents or guardian to provide their basic needs such as cloths, money, and handset may be looking outside for a person to provide such needs. This might end in their being sexually abused that might lead to teenage pregnancy. Ogueri and Nwakamma (2011) emphasized that economic hardship and unemployment have made young girls to fall prey of adult men who abuse them sexually. On the other hand, some of the teenagers who pick interest watching home video. Where by such facilities is not available may seek for alternative in another person's home which may call up a situation that can lead to teenage pregnancy.

Quest for Materialism: Many of the teenagers have high test and urge to have what the need when the resources are not available in getting such needs like quality clothing materials, pingng bags and sophisticated mobile phones sets. They engage themselves in prostitution in other to provide for such needs which results may end in teenage pregnancy. Some of the teenage girls group themselves as sophisticated or the so called pingng ladies

who see themselves as high class girls in the society who mingle with hoodlums notoriously known as big boys to provide them with expensive gifts like cars, refrigerators, and high quality materials to wear in the process of getting them, teenage pregnancy might occur. Azuka, (2016) opinion, that some of our teenagers in the society because of the economic clench in our economy has yielded to sexual abuse with the so called sugar daddies.

Keeping Friends of Opposite Sex: Friendship is a phenomenon of intimate relationship between and among persons. Hornby (2004) define it as a relationship of mutual affection between people. He explains friends as a stronger form of interpersonal bond than an association. Friends are many at times taken to love one another. Invariably, friendship cuts across all categories of persons, the old and young alike, male and female alike. Doubtless, my friends of social issues go with friendship. Many of these issues are definitely desirable, going with moral virtues. However, too many of the issues are understandable, going with moral vices often risks of moral decoding arise in friendship when opposite sexes are in involved. This is because making friends of opposite sex brings the male and female into interpersonal relationship endured with affection, foundness and love. Chikobi (2012) observed that when two persons who love each other begin to associate more intimately they begin to attract each other more sexuality and intensively. The situation is more pronounced with teenagers and creates room for teenage pregnancy.

According to Chikobi and Ezumezu (2002) pregnancy related complications were among the main causes of death in 15-19 years old females in majority of developing

countries mainly high in girls below 18 years of age.

There is need to forestall the undesirable outcomes of unwanted pregnancy especially in adolescent (teenagers). It is for this reason that the researchers deemed it necessary to undertake a study on factors of teenage pregnancy as experience especially in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State visa-vis counseling implications.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors of teenage pregnancy as perceived by biology students from monogamous homes?
2. What are the factors of teenage pregnancy as perceived by biology students from polygamous homes?

Null hypothesis

Biology students from monogamous or polygamous home do not significantly differ in their mean perception of factors of teenage pregnancy. ($P > .05$)

Method

The study was a descriptive survey carried out in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State of Nigeria. The population for the study was 5000 Biology students from the 60 secondary schools Anambra State under the management of Anambra State school services commission (PPSSC). Three hundred and fifty-nine(359) biology students (258 students from monogamous homes and 101 students from polygamous homes) drawn using purposive sampling technique (based on convenience). Instrument for data collection was questionnaire of bio data in sections A and possible factors of teenage pregnancy in section B. Sections A had two items while section B had 7 items. Sections B was constructed on five point likert scale of likert point as followed: Strongly Agree 5 points, Agree 4 points, Undecided 3 points, Disagree 2 points, and Strongly Disagree 1

point. The questionnaire was validated by three researchers in Education. It was pilot tested for reliability in Aguata Education Zone using 20 secondary school students. A value of 0.88 was obtained for the Cronbach Alfa for which researcher took the instrument as reliable for the investigation. The researcher administered the questionnaire by hand. A total of 359 copies were distributed, duly completed and returned. The research questions were answered using mean with decision point of 3.00. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test at .05 level of significant

Hence items with mean of 3.00 and above were accepted. Items of mean value of less than 3.00 were rejected.

Results

Research Questions 1: What are the factors of teenage pregnancy as perceived by biology students from monogamous homes?

Table 1: Mean perception of biology students from monogamous homes on factors teenage pregnancy.

n = 359				
S/N	Factors of teenage pregnancy	X	SD	DE
1	Peer group orientation	3.77	3.00	A
2	Lack of sex education	3.79	3.00	A
3	Lack of reasonable activities. E.g. Reading	3.76	1.78	A
4	Broken homes	3.78	3.00	A
5	Ignorance of sexuality education	3.71	2.18	A
6	Immoral homes like those of promiscus parents.	3.75	3.00	A
7	Culture e.g. those that tolerate promiscuity	3.73	2.78	A
Grand total		3.76		

Table 1 above shows that all 7 items investigated as possible factors of teenage pregnancy are accepted by biology students

in monogamous homes. The grand mean exenterates the result. The item had SD values of small magnitudes hence the students were close to one another in their ratings.

Research Questions 2: What are the factors of teenage pregnancy as perceived by biology students from polygamous homes?

Table 2: Mean perception of biology students from polygamous homes on factors to teenage pregnancy.
n = 359

S / N	Factors of teenage pregnancy	X	SD	DE
1	Peer group orientation	3.80	3.00	A
2	Lack of sex education	3.83	3.00	A
3	Lack of reasonable activities. E.g. Reading	3.76	2.28	A
4	Broken homes	3.81	1.98	A
5	Ignorance of sexuality education	3.86	1.97	A
6	Immoral homes like those of promiscus parents.	3.82	2.20	A
7	Culture e.g. those that tolerate promiscuity	3.79	3.00	A
Grand total		3.81		

Table 2 above also shows that all 7 items investigated as possible factors of teenage pregnancy are accepted by biology students in polygamous homes. The grand mean exenterates the result. The item serve SD values of small magnitudes hence the students are close to one another in their ratings.

Null Hypothesis

Table 3: T-test summary of t-test on differences in mean perception of biology

students from monogamous and polygamous homes on factors to teenage pregnancy.

Status	Number of cases	Mean of rating	Standard error	t-calculated	t-critical	Degree of freedom	P
Monogamous	258	3.76	0.01	2.00	1.98	736	.05
Polygamous homes	101	3.81	0.01				

P<0.05, t-calculated (2.00) > t-critical 1.98.

From table 3, it is observed that probability (P) of difference being due to error is less than 0.05. At 0.05 level of significances the calculated value is 2.00, which is greater than the critical t-value, of 1.98.

Following the above therefore, significant difference exists in the mean perception of the teenage girls of the two statuses. The null hypothesis (H₀¹) is, hence, rejected. Accordingly, teenage girls from monogamous and polygamous homes significantly differ in their mean perception of the factors of teenage pregnancy in Awka Education Zone.

Discussion

The results of the study echo the experiences on ground regarding teenagers and teenage pregnancy. As a matter of fact, beyond the seven factors covered in the study quit a number of other factors obtained and are on fathomed. Oguaju (2008) notes cases of broken home, having friends of opposite sex, early married and others.

In Nigeria, maternal deaths from high-risk teenage pregnancies contribute significantly to the high maternal mortality rates. These occur either as a result of complications of delivery like eclampsia hemorrhage, Anaemia and obstructed labour, or from unsafe abortion complications. Out of

50,000 maternal deaths estimated to occur in the country annually, 20,000 were contributed to complications of induced abortion, especially in teenage and young women of polygamous and monogamous homes. The issue is worrisome because in Nigeria a lot of risk factors were found to be responsible for the large number of pregnancies among teenagers. They include early marriage, early sex debut, environmental sanitization, social deprivation, quest for materialism, keeping friends of opposite sex, early initiation of sexual activity, completion of primary/secondary education at an early age by girls, deterioration in the traditional lack of knowledge of reproductive health, low and ineffective use of contraceptives at early age, Menarch among females and polygamy. (Chikobi 2012).

The findings of the investigation are not surprising regarding two research questions. This is because seven items studied are indeed plausible as factors associated with teenage pregnancy. The findings agreed with those of Chikobi and Ezumezu (2002) who observed that out of relevant to teenage pregnancy in developing societies like Nigeria abound. In respect of hypothesis result is also not surprising this is because the biology students of the monogamous and polygamous homes would not have, for any good reason, be influenced in their perfection by family status and background. Although, this tends to disagree with Oguaju (2006) who found environment an important factor in thought process of the adolescent, it is consonance with Chikobi and Ezumezu (2002) who did observe significance relationship between the environment of the child and development of the grey matter of the brain vis-à-vis feelings and perception.

The findings of the study are not likely to change in the near with repeat investigations. This is premised on the note that society is not practically changing for the better and they new trends social media with information communication technology (ICT) are not helping matters Ezumezu (2015) is succulent on this.

Summary

The study investigated the perception of biology students from monogamous and polygamous homes regarding factor of teenage pregnancy. Seven possible factors were studied and both groups of biology students accepted all of them as true factors. The two groups of biology students did not differ significantly in their opinions for all the seven items investigated they were close to one another in their responses.

Conclusion

Pregnancy is usually a welcome experience and a thing of joy when it occurs at an appropriate time, such as in wedlock and at a mature age. However, it engenders concern if it occurs outside wedlock and in adolescence for this constitutes social and reproductive health problems which bring about high rate of morbidity and mortality in teenage girls. Teenagers could be effectively counseled on the factors of teenage pregnancy which could mar there future. Teenage pregnancies are always associated with many complications for both the mother and the child.

Recommendations

1. Biology teaching should be intensified with instructions in sexuality education.
2. There should be inculcation of good moral character in the biology students by parents, teachers and all who are concerned with child training and development.

3. Population and family education in biology curriculum should be strengthened with sexual education.
4. Guidance and counseling in schools should be intensified and biology teachers should inculcate the principles in teaching for moral development of the biology students.

like Nigeria abound. (Onitsha: New crest publishers) pp.237-210.

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