**Teen Pregnancies**

**Kelly Oldham**

**Southern New Hampshire University**

**Dr. Cravens**

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**Teen pregnancies**

Teenage pregnancy refers to an intended pregnancy that occurs when a girl is in her adolescence. The reason I chose this topic is because of the alarming rate of these pregnancies. The primary and secondary sources of information that I have used in this research are credible. This is because I was able to obtain specific data and statistics from government and Non-Governmental Organizations websites. I also managed to interact one on one with a few teenage mothers who talked to me about their life in school and what led them to bear children at a young age.

It is estimated that in year 2014, 249,000 babies were born to teen girls of between ages 15 and 19.Unlike their peers who bear children later in life, teen mothers are likely not to finish high school, depend on public assistance, likely to be poor as adults, and are likely to bear children who have behavioral and healthproblems later in life as compared to other children (HHS, 2016).

In this community, variation in income inequality has been seen to be a contributing factor to teen childbearing. This is because income inequality is associated with inadequate economic opportunity, and those at the bottom of the distribution as seen as less important in the society. From the information I got after interacting with some of the individuals affected by this menace, i.e. teenage girls and their mothers is that poverty is a major factor many teenage girls have children while they are young and unmarried (Kearney, 2012).

Teen pregnancies and childbearing have significant economic costs to the government as well. This is because the government loses billions of dollars that would have been paid as tax revenue; greater expenditures for public health care and foster care; increase in public assistance payments; and greater expenditures on services for criminal justice. These teen mothers are also likely to suffer unemployment because of dropping out from school (CDC, 2015).

**Causes of teenage pregnancies**

Peer pressure

When children reach adolescence, they feel the pressure to make friends, to be equal and to belong to a certain group. As a result their friends in the group end up influencing their decisions, and engage in sex even when not aware of the consequences so that they don’t disappoint their friends.After conducting a research, The Kaiser Family Foundation found out that 29% of pregnant teens were pressured to have sex, whereas 33% did it so as not to suffer rejection from their peers (Langham, 2015).

Absent parents

In situations where parents are not available to give guidance to their children, there is a chance that teen girls will get pregnant. When parents become too busy to talk with their children about issues such as sex, they will turn to their friends for direction who are likely to give the wrong advice resulting in a pregnancy (Langham, 2015).

Glamorizing of pregnancy

The media and the movie glamorize pregnant teens in new stories and movies. They bring it out like it’s something to be desired thereby encouraging teens to engage in sexual activity. As adolescence is an age where teens want to be part of a group, if teen pregnancy is seen as acceptable by the friends, one will do it so as to be socially accepted (Langham, 2015).

Lack of Knowledge

There are teenagers who are naïve and not educated about sex and that can cause an unwanted pregnancy. Some may not have the knowledge about biological and emotional effects of engaging in sex. The teens may get the wrong information from friends and other misinformed sources (Langham, 2015).

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse or rape is also a cause of teen pregnancies. It is estimated that 5% of all teen births are as a result of rape.

Teenage Drinking

Teens love to experiment with drugs and alcohol and this lowers their ability to control themselves. It is estimated that 75% of teenage pregnancies that occur to girls of ages 14 to 21 are as a result of use of drugs and alcohol(Langham, 2015).

**How to prevent teen pregnancies**

Parents should make it a habit of sitting with their children, helping them with homework, attending talents show together, etc. to show them that they care about their education. It is through such sessions that children get to be free with their parents and are later able to discuss major issues like sex education. Parents should also show love and affection to their children because if they fail to do so they will seek it from their peers who may end up misleading them (Cummins, 2016).

Parents and guardians need to supervise their teens before they are mature enough to become independent. There needs to be rules and they should be followed. This is because adolescents will tend to push boundaries but they need to be shown that there are limits. For example, when they go to a shopping mall, it should be for a specific reason. When they insist on going to visit their friends, the parent should know these friends(Cummins, 2016).

Since it is not possible for parents to stick with their teen children at all times, it is important that parents give them tools to make good decisions. Parents should be available and interested in the lives of their children so that they are able to positively influence them. Above all they should be good role models that the children can emulate.They should discuss teen pregnancy and the consequences of sex before marriage (Cummins, 2016).

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