

21. STUDY ON SOCIAL FACTORS
AFFECTING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES
IN A TERTIARY CARE SETTING

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OBJECTIVES:

To assess the social factors affecting for the teenage pregnancies in a tertiary care setting.

METHOD:

A cross sectional descriptive study was done using a pretested interviewer administered questionnaire. All teenage pregnant mothers attending the ante natal clinic of the professorial unit at the De Soyza Hospital for Women were recruited. Study was conducted for a period of 8 months from December 2005. Approval was obtained from the ethical clearance committee at the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo. Results were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for windows (SPSS) version 11.

RESULTS:

150 teenage pregnant mothers participated to the study from ages of 15 to 19yrs (mean age 18.37, SD +/-1.013). 12.7% had studied up to grade 5, 46.7% have studied up to grade 6 to 10. Only 6.7% studied up to advanced level. None of them had tertiary education. 64% of teenage mothers were unemployed and 34.6% worked as non skilled workers. Only 1.4% were skilled. 28% of teenage mothers' had lost their either father or mother. In 6.2% parents were separated. 35.1% were exposed to marital disharmony of their parents. Of their parents 40.9% of mothers and 9.4% of their fathers were employed abroad. 38.3% of the teenage mothers had siblings with teenage marriages and 20.8% had siblings with teenage pregnancies.

75.7% married following a love affair and 32.4% married without approval from parents. 33.3% had premarital coitus. 6% have not registered their marriage while 2.4% conceived following a sexual abuse. Among 24.3% of proposed marriages 2.9% were due to financial reasons and rest were due to cultural reasons. 72.7% of population conceived within 6 months following their marriage (mean 6.1 SD +/- 5.9).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Maternal deprivation due to foreign employment ($p=0.002$) and death ($p= 0.003$) significantly increases the risk of teenage pregnancies. Marital disharmony of parents ($p= 0.001$) also contributes significantly. There is a need for more detailed attention to social reasons if we are to reduce teenage pregnancies.