

Trends, associated socio-demographic factors, and outcomes of teenage pregnancy in selected MOH areas in Jaffna District

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Background and Objective: Teenage pregnancy is an emerging global threat and a contributor to adverse pregnancy outcomes and is known to be linked with socio-economic status. This study describes trends in teenage pregnancy and the association of sociodemographic factors with outcomes of teenage pregnancy in selected MOH areas of the Jaffna district during a 5-year period.

Methods: This was a descriptive cross-sectional study. Data on 347 teenage pregnancies that occurred between January 2016 and December 2020 were extracted from the eligible couple register (H 526) and pregnant mothers register (H 513) in three MOH areas (Jaffna, Nallur, Sandilipay) in the Jaffna district.

Results: Among the 347 teenage pregnancies 49, 72, 79, 81, and 99 teenage pregnancies occurred in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. The breakdown was as follows: 47.6% were 19 years, 33.4% were 18 years, 15.3% were 17 years, 2.9% were 16 years, and 0.9% were 15 years of age. The majority (54.2%) had studied up to GCE O/L. Just over (50.1%) were in the abnormal BMI range. Less than half (47.0%) of the teen mothers had taken folic acid before pregnancy and were immunized against rubella. In the sample, 19.5% were documented as using a contraceptive method, and pre-pregnancy screening was done in 39.8%. With respect to delivery, 63.7% underwent normal vaginal delivery, while 15% underwent caesarean section. A small proportion resulted in low birth weight (14.7%), pre-term birth (5.2%), abortion (1.4%), congenital abnormalities (0.9%), and stillbirth (0.9%). There was no evidence of a statistically significant association between the age of mothers and contraception use, pre-pregnancy folic acid use, pre-pregnancy screening, rubella immunization status, mode of delivery, preterm birth, low birth weight, congenital abnormalities, stillbirth, or abortion.

Conclusions: This study shows an increasing trend in teenage pregnancies. Interventions are needed to prevent teenage pregnancies, including community-based research.

Keywords: Adolescent pregnancy, Socio-demographic factors, Pregnancy outcomes, Public health midwife