

**P1.6. Factors Contributing to Adolescent Pregnancy in a Peri-Urban Sub-district of Ghana - GK Norgbe**, University of Ghana School of Public Health; **PA Kudolo**, University of Ghana School of Public Health; **AM Kotoh**; University of Ghana School of Public Health  
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**Background/Significance:** Too early pregnancy increases the risk of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. The problem of adolescent pregnancy not only burdens individual teenagers and their babies, but also its wide effect on the community and nation is evidenced by the number of street children, adolescent gangsters who indulge in armed robbery, commercial sex work and many other social vices.

Premarital sexual activity is common in Ghana with over forty percent of adolescents reporting for having experienced sexual activity. The incidence in the Dodowa sub-district is over and above the national average and continues to progressively increase over the last five years. The study findings therefore have programmatic and policy implications for promoting adolescent health and sexual practices.

**Objective:** The study was conducted to investigate factors contributing to adolescent pregnancies in the Dodowa sub-district of Ghana so as to inform programmatic and policies decisions of the health and local government authorities. Specifically, objectives were to describe the socio-economic background of adolescents and the role socio-economic factors play in the incidence of adolescent pregnancy, to determine knowledge and usage of contraceptives among adolescents, to assess the cultural influence on behaviour of adolescents and to determine the influence of educational aspirations on the sexual behaviour of adolescents.

**Methodology & Data:** Respondents were chosen from among pregnant adolescents between the ages of 10-19 years, mothers of pregnant adolescents, adolescent who were never pregnant and mothers of adolescent who were never pregnant. Additionally ten religious and opinion leaders were selected for in-depth interviews. Purposive and convenience sampling procedure was used. The study was exploratory employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. An interviewer administered structured questionnaire and interview guides were used for data collection. Data on hundred (100) female adolescents, hundred (100) of their mothers and ten (10) opinion leaders were analysed. Using frequency tables, pie charts, bar charts and cross tabulations, the distributions of the respondents were presented. The chi-square test was used to establish the association between the independent variables stated in the hypothesis and pregnant adolescents (dependent variable)

**Findings:** Cumulatively, 80.5% of adolescents surveyed who were sexually active attributed their indulgence in sex to financial considerations. Seventy percent of pregnant adolescents and 35.6% of never-pregnant adolescents assigned economic or financial reasons for their action. This seems to collaborate with the ranking of opinion leaders who considered poverty as the leading cause for adolescents indulging in early sex. Adolescents with low educational aspiration were more likely to become pregnant than those with high educational aspirations. In consonance with their aspirations the study revealed that 22 percent of the mothers of never-pregnant adolescents were regular income earners as compared to 10 percent of mothers of pregnant adolescents who were in non-permanent jobs. The study showed that contraceptive usage and abstinence were high in the never-pregnant adolescent group as compared to the pregnant adolescent group.

The finding of the study showed that the educational aspirations, mothers' occupation, parental control, knowledge and use of contraceptives were significantly related to adolescent sexuality. Adolescents who got pregnant were found to involve in sex principally for economic reasons

**Knowledge Contribution:** There is the need to initiate comprehensive adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes targeting primary and Junior Secondary School pupils, integration of school girls who get pregnant back to school, formation of abstinence clubs, economic empowerment of women and initiation of the community mothers programme.