

The perception of Ghanaian mothers on sex communication and their role in teenage pregnancy prevention in Bolgatanga, Ghana

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Introduction

- 95% teenage pregnancies occur in LMICs (WHO, 2014)
- Ghana one of these LMICs
- Upper East Region highest national prevalence
 - 15% teenage pregnancies (Coughlin, 2016)
- Open parent-child sex communication → less adolescent sexual activity, later onset of sexual activities and higher self-efficacy for condom use (Hutchinson, 2002; Adu-Mireku, 2003)
- **Study aim:** To gain an in-depth insight in (factors influencing) mother-daughter sex communication in Bolgatanga, Ghana.

Methods

- Semi-structured individual in-depth interviews
- 10 mothers of daughters teenage pregnancy history
- Bolgatanga, The Upper East Region, Ghana
- Interview protocol: relationship with the children, sex communication, teenage sexuality and pregnancy and the role of the society
- Nvivo 10



Results (1)

Experiences with and beliefs towards teenage pregnancy

- Low risk perception daughter
- Negative attitude teenage sexuality and pregnancy
 - *“She thinks that it is not good, it doesn’t bring anything to the child or or it doesn’t add anything to the child or the parents it rather creates a lot of problems in the system.”*

Results (2)

Experiences with & beliefs towards sex communication

- Limited experience in childhood
- Feel responsible
- Understood need
 - *“In our culture that is not good to teach them about sex, but because of the situation at hand because the children they don't respect the again they said they are in modern world so because of that it's good you teach them.”*
- Limited topics: abstinence, STIs and faithfulness
- Family planning discussed by few:
 - Sexual promiscuity vs. prevention
- High self-efficacy
- Low outcome efficacy

Results (3)

Religion and (traditional) culture

- Traditional festivals e.g. funerals
- Abstinence messages
- Taboo and stigma towards teen sexuality and pregnancy
 - *“She said it’s because of the culture some would not discuss it with their children meanwhile the intention is to make the child to stay away and not to allow the child to go out.”*
- Perceived need vs. traditional values/norms



Results (4)

Responsibilities & Solutions

- School-based sex education (including family planning)
- Involve father
- Family planning methods
 - *“This could have been prevented, if they knew earlier they would have educated her on family planning they could have prevented this from happening.”*



Discussion

- Low outcome efficacy barrier for discussing family planning
- Low risk perception caused mothers not to realize extensive sex communication was necessary
- Conflict mother's norms vs. mother's awareness of the need for family planning
- Traditional and religious norms barrier for effective mother-daughter sex communication
- Limited experience with sex communication in childhood seemed not to affect awareness of need

Conclusion

- Factors influencing mother-daughter sex communication:
 - Religious and traditional norms and beliefs
 - Negative attitudes towards teenage sexuality
 - Low outcome efficacy towards sex communication
 - Low risk perception for their teenage daughter becoming pregnant
- Study highlights importance of individual and environmental factors influencing mother-daughter sex communication in Bolgatanga, Ghana

Practical recommendations

- Take the identified factors into account while developing future programs and policies
- Intervention improving parent-child sex communication
 - Increase awareness of children's sexual activity
 - Increase perceived outcome efficacy
 - Increase knowledge & skills on how to have comprehensive sex communication
 - Mothers seem to need (societal) confirmation that sex communication is a good thing
 - Try to involve the father in sex communication

Thank you for your attention!



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