

Adolescent Pregnancy/Parenthood —

A. Knowledge

- Prevalence of adolescent pregnancy
 - 1 million pregnancies/annum
 - Approximately 550,000 births/annum
- Adolescent psychosocial development
 - Meaning of having an infant
 - Desire for infant to fill personal voids
 - Teenage male machismo
- Lack of adequate prenatal care associated with adolescent pregnancy
- Risk factors for adolescent parenthood
 - Lack of education
 - Poverty
 - History of teen pregnancy in grandparent
 - Cultural acceptance of teen pregnancy
- Risk factors for children of adolescent mothers
 - Developmental delay due to inadequate stimulation
 - Growth delay
 - Aberrant maternal child interaction
 - Poor school performance

B. Skills

- Patient education/teaching skills: teaching which utilizes techniques appropriate for adolescent developmental stages
- STD identification and treatment
- HIV prevention/education skills
- Gyn exam skills
- Communication and interview skills which build a therapeutic alliance with the adolescent
- Counseling and prescribing contraception

C. Attitudes

- Awareness of complex family issues associated with adolescent pregnancy (young grandmothers, daycare issues, parental school completion, teenagers with jobs and children)
- Awareness of adolescent psychosocial concerns: dating, contraception, violence, gangs, etc.

D. Barriers

Family pressure to stay at home, care for child and not return to school
Lack of affordable day care
Peer pressure to be sexually active
Poor understanding of child development
Parental immaturity
Adolescent "attitudes" of independence, negativism
Cultural acceptance of adolescent parenting
Social acceptance of teen pregnancy within peer group and poor role models in family surroundings

E. Advocacy

Work for increased funding of comprehensive adolescent parenting services including contraceptives, and high risk behavior education
Advocate for improved access to daycare
Advocate for supported school attendance/degree completion programs (programs including daycare, specialized transportation, home tutoring, etc.)
Inservice staff training concerning birth control, teen pregnancy

References

- Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families, Report of the National Commission on Children, Washington DC, 1991.
The State of American's Children, 1991. The Children's Defense Fund, Washington, DC, 1991.
Fisher W. An Integrated Approach to Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy and STD/HIV Infection, SEICUS report; 18(4), April/May 1990.
Dryfoos J. Prevalence of adolescent pregnancy in Adolescent At Risk. Prevalence and Prevention, Oxford University Press, 1990.