

Reproductive and Sexual Health Acquaintance as Factor On the Teenage Pregnancy among Adolescents

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Abstract: *This study critically investigates the intricate relationship between sociodemographic factors and sexual and reproductive health knowledge among adolescent girls residing in Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, a region marked by persistently elevated teenage pregnancy rates. Employing a quantitative research design with purposive quota sampling, the study surveyed 100 female adolescents aged 10-24, examining variables such as age, religion, educational attainment, and parental marital status. Contrary to initial hypotheses, the findings revealed that sociodemographic factors, when considered in isolation, did not demonstrate a statistically significant direct impact on reproductive health knowledge. However, a notable positive correlation emerged between parental involvement and adolescents' comprehension of reproductive health, underscoring the vital role of familial engagement. These findings emphasize the urgent need for targeted, community-based interventions that actively involve parents and provide comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education. By fostering enhanced health literacy, these interventions can play a crucial role in mitigating the prevalence of teenage pregnancies within this vulnerable population."*

Keywords: *Teenage pregnancy, Reproductive Health, Sexual Health, Adolescent Health, Comprehensive sex education*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy remains a pressing public health concern in the Philippines, with 9% of women aged 15-19 having initiated childbearing as of 2017. This figure, in conjunction with the country's persistently high fertility rates – despite a median female marriage age of 27 (Pepito et al., 2020) – highlights a deeply ingrained societal issue. The consequences of teenage pregnancy extend far beyond physical health, imposing significant emotional and psychosocial risks on young mothers. These challenges often contribute to cyclical patterns of underemployment, reduced educational attainment, and entrenched poverty. Research consistently underscores the necessity of comprehensive sex education and increased access to reproductive health services as critical strategies to mitigate teenage pregnancy (Pasay-an, 2020). However, a persistent

gap in adolescents' knowledge regarding pregnancy and reproductive health remains, with inadequate understanding identified as a key predictor of teenage pregnancy in the Philippine context (Moshie, 2023). Socio-demographic factors, particularly educational attainment and household wealth play a profound role in the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy. Teenage girls with higher levels of education and those from wealthier households experience significantly lower pregnancy rates compared to their peers from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (Salvador, 2019). Additionally, deeply entrenched cultural practices, such as early marriage, further exacerbate the issue – particularly in rural areas where limited educational and economic opportunities may lead families to prioritize the early marriage of young girls (UNFPA, 2020). Despite the enactment of the Reproductive Health Law, which aims to provide universal access to reproductive health services, conservative attitudes toward adolescent contraceptive use continue to hinder adherence to World Health Organization guidelines (Cabaraban, 2022).

This study aims to provide a detailed profile of teenage pregnancy prevalence in Poblacion, Tagoloan, and Misamis Oriental, while rigorously examining the relationship between socio-demographic factors and adolescents' knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. By identifying and understanding the underlying determinants of teenage pregnancy in this locality, this research seeks to inform the development of evidence-based interventions and policy measures that can effectively reduce adolescent pregnancy rates. Ultimately, this study aspires to safeguard the reproductive health and rights of adolescents in the region, focusing on fostering greater awareness and access to reproductive health education and services. Specifically, the study will explore the correlational relationship between socio-demographic profiles and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health among teenagers in the community.

II. Method

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the correlational relationship between socio-demographic factors and reproductive and sexual health knowledge among female adolescents aged 10-24 in Barangay Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental. Utilizing a descriptive methodology, the study aimed to systematically characterize the target population and assess their knowledge levels through objective and quantifiable measures. Ethical considerations were rigorously followed, ensuring that informed parental consent was obtained for minor participants and that all data collection processes adhered strictly to established ethical guidelines.

A purposive quota sampling technique was used to recruit at least 100 participants, ensuring that the sample represented the diverse age strata within the adolescent population. Data collection involved structured interviews, using a two-part questionnaire adapted from a previously validated instrument. The first part of the questionnaire gathered comprehensive socio-demographic information, while the second part assessed participants' knowledge of reproductive and sexual health. Responses were scored and categorized into distinct knowledge levels: "Highly Knowledgeable," "Knowledgeable," and "Not Knowledgeable." The validity and reliability of the adapted instrument were confirmed through the psychometric properties reported in the original study, with statistical significance determined at a p-value of less than 0.05.

Statistical analyses were conducted to describe the sample characteristics and identify key patterns within the data. Frequency and percentage distributions were calculated to profile the socio-demographic attributes of the participants, while means and standard deviations were used to interpret the distribution of knowledge levels. Additionally, based on the study's findings, an informational pamphlet aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy was developed. The pamphlet's creation followed a structured approach, which included meticulous content planning, design, writing, and peer review, ensuring it was suitable for dissemination to the adolescent population within the study area.

III. Results and Discussion

This chapter includes the data collected using the research tool suitable for this study. Following each table, there is an analysis and interpretation of the data. The data sets are arranged and organized according to the statement of the problem outlined in the first chapter.

Problem 1: What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, religion, educational level, and parental status?

Table 1 highlights that the study population was predominantly composed of older adolescents, with 53% aged 18-24 and 42% aged 14-17. This age distribution underscores a critical developmental stage for sexual health education, particularly as adolescents transition into adulthood. It emphasizes the urgent need for targeted and comprehensive sexual health programs designed specifically for older adolescents. These programs should focus on practical, real-world skills such as consent, communication, and negotiation, which are essential for making informed and responsible decisions. By equipping adolescents with these tools, such programs have the potential to foster healthier behaviors, including increased condom use, delayed sexual activity, and ultimately, improved sexual health outcomes.

Table 2 indicates that 94% of respondents identify as Roman Catholic, suggesting that the teachings of the Catholic Church, which traditionally advocates conservative views on contraception and sexual education, may significantly shape adolescents' understanding and attitudes toward sexual and reproductive health. This highlights the critical need for sexual health education programs that are both culturally sensitive and inclusive—programs that respect religious values while ensuring the delivery of accurate, evidence-based information. By incorporating religious and cultural contexts into educational strategies, these programs can empower adolescents to make informed and responsible

decisions regarding their sexual health, ultimately improving their overall sexual and reproductive well-being.

Table 3 illustrates the educational landscape among respondents, revealing that 34% are currently in high school, 28% are high school graduates, and another 28% are at the college level. This distribution highlights that a majority of respondents have at least a secondary education. Such an educational profile emphasizes the need for sexual health education programs tailored to the diverse needs of adolescents, particularly those still in high school or recently graduated. By implementing comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education initiatives, we can enhance adolescents' knowledge and decision-making abilities,

ultimately fostering healthier behaviors and reducing risky sexual practices. This approach will contribute to improved sexual health outcomes and support the overall well-being of youth.

Table 4 reveals that the largest group of respondents consists of married parents (41%), followed by single parents (25%) and live-in partners (23%), with smaller percentages from separated (9%) and widowed families (2%). This distribution underscores the significant role family dynamics play in adolescents' access to sexual health information and support. Stable family structures are often associated with better communication regarding sexual health topics, which can positively influence adolescents' understanding and decision-making. The diversity in parental statuses highlights the need for sexual health education programs that are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of adolescents from different family backgrounds. Programs must be tailored to address the challenges faced by those who may lack open communication or support, ensuring that all adolescents receive comprehensive education and guidance to promote healthier sexual behaviors and outcomes.

Problem 2: What is the level of knowledge of the teenager about reproductive health?

The analysis reveals a varied range of knowledge levels regarding reproductive health among respondents, suggesting a moderate overall understanding of key concepts. While many participants demonstrate awareness of crucial issues, such as the possibility of pregnancy during first intercourse and the effectiveness of condoms, significant misconceptions remain—particularly regarding the reuse of condoms and the effectiveness of periodic abstinence as a contraceptive method. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted educational interventions aimed at correcting misconceptions and improving overall reproductive health literacy. Specifically, interventions should focus on addressing these misunderstandings and enhancing adolescents' comprehension of less commonly understood contraceptive methods and sexual health practices. By doing so, we can foster a more informed, responsible approach to reproductive health among young people.

Problem 3: What is the level of knowledge of the teenager about sexual health?

The weighted mean scores in *Table 8* reveal that respondents possess varying levels of understanding regarding key beliefs about sexual behavior and contraception, with an overall classification of moderate knowledge. While participants generally acknowledge the potential for pregnancy resulting from sexual activity and recognize the existence of various contraceptive methods, significant misconceptions remain. Notably, social stigmas—such as the embarrassment some women experience when purchasing condoms—persist and influence attitudes toward sexual health. These findings underscore the critical need for comprehensive sexual health education that goes beyond merely presenting practical contraceptive options. Such education must also address prevailing misconceptions, challenge harmful social stigmas, and foster healthier, more informed attitudes toward sexual health among adolescents. By doing so, we can empower young people to make better, more responsible decisions about their sexual health.

Problem 4: Is there a significant relationship between the socio demographic profile of the respondents and their knowledge about reproductive and sexual health?

Table 7 presents various demographic factors, including age, religion, educational attainment, and parental status, yet reveals no significant correlations with knowledge of reproductive or sexual health, as all p-values exceeded the conventional threshold of 0.05. This lack of significant correlation points to potential systemic challenges in the delivery and effectiveness of sexual and reproductive health education for teenagers in Tagoloan. It suggests that adolescents may not be receiving sufficient or comprehensive information and support, irrespective of their demographic backgrounds. To address these concerns, further research is warranted to explore the underlying factors that influence knowledge about reproductive and sexual health. This includes assessing the quality of current educational resources, examining cultural attitudes toward sexual health topics, and identifying gaps in communication and outreach. Such research will be essential for developing more effective, tailored educational frameworks that meet the specific needs of

young individuals and enhance their understanding of sexual and reproductive health.

Problem 5: What program can be developed to prevent teenage pregnancy?

The study on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge among teenagers in Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive program aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy. The proposed program should include key components such as age-appropriate educational workshops tailored to different adolescent age groups, initiatives to involve parents and improve communication about SRH, and community outreach efforts through mobile health clinics and awareness campaigns. Furthermore, the program advocates for integrating SRH education into school curricula to ensure that all adolescents receive accurate and relevant information. The use of technology for disseminating SRH information, such as mobile apps or online resources, would also be crucial in reaching a broader audience. Additionally, the program would incorporate robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess its impact, ensuring continuous improvement in both knowledge levels and reductions in teenage pregnancy rates. This multi-faceted approach, with its focus on education, community engagement, and technological innovation, has the potential to significantly improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes in the region.

IV. EXHAUSTIVE DISCUSSION

The study investigates the demographic factors influencing adolescent sexual health knowledge in Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, revealing that 53% of respondents are aged 18-24, a group more likely to be sexually active. The predominance of Roman Catholic respondents (94%) suggests that religious beliefs may significantly influence their access to sexual health information, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive educational programs that respect religious values while providing accurate sexual health knowledge. Additionally, with the majority of participants having at least a secondary education, they are more likely to engage in comprehensive sexual health education, particularly on practical topics such as contraception and consent. The family dynamics observed in the study indicate that parental involvement is crucial in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward sexual health, as active communication from parents positively influences their understanding.

The findings reveal varying levels of sexual health knowledge among respondents, with a moderate understanding of risks such as pregnancy during first intercourse and the effectiveness of condoms. However, significant gaps persist, particularly concerning essential contraceptive methods like IUDs and misconceptions about the reuse of condoms – misunderstandings that can lead to unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. These gaps highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to correct these misconceptions and ensure adolescents receive accurate and comprehensive sexual health information.

The study also explores the relationship between sociodemographic factors and sexual health knowledge. While factors such as age, religion, and educational attainment did not significantly influence knowledge levels, parental involvement emerged as a critical determinant. Active communication from parents positively impacted adolescents' understanding of sexual and reproductive health topics, emphasizing the importance of incorporating parents into sexual health education initiatives.

Based on these insights, the study proposes a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health program tailored to the unique needs of adolescents in the community. This program would include workshops, parental engagement initiatives, community outreach campaigns, and the integration of technology-driven tools to enhance knowledge and reduce teenage pregnancy rates. By addressing the gaps in knowledge and fostering stronger community support, this program aims to improve sexual health outcomes for young people in Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental.

V. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the urgent need for a tailored sexual and reproductive health education program that is sensitive to the unique sociocultural context of adolescents in Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental. The demographic analysis shows that most respondents, aged 18-24, are Roman Catholic and have at least a secondary education, positioning them to engage in in-depth discussions on sexual health. Despite this, significant knowledge gaps remain, particularly around misconceptions about contraceptive methods and the crucial role of open family communication on sexual health topics.

While sociodemographic factors such as age, religion, and education show limited influence on knowledge levels, parental involvement emerges as a critical factor in enhancing adolescents' reproductive health understanding. This finding highlights the importance of integrating parents into sexual health education initiatives. The study recommends

a comprehensive program that includes educational workshops for both adolescents and parents, community outreach, and school-based health services. These efforts would provide accurate information, dispel misconceptions, and equip adolescents with the necessary skills to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

By addressing social stigmas and promoting open dialogue, the proposed initiatives aim to create a supportive environment for adolescents, reducing the rates of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Ultimately, these efforts seek to improve the overall well-being of youth in Poblacion, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, fostering a healthier, more informed generation.

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