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Knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards teenage pregnancy as a caregiver: A cross sectional study

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Abstract

Background: Teenage pregnancy creates significant challenges, impacting both the mother and child. Adolescents, due to their physical and emotional immaturity, are at higher risk for several health and social problems. It is influenced by various factors, including individual, family, and community characteristics. Nursing students are on the pathway to becoming essential caregivers across a vast area of healthcare system. To understand the attitudes of healthcare providers, is crucial for student nurses because these attitudes significantly impact the quality of care provided to teenage mothers.

Purpose: This study aims to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of nursing students towards teenage pregnancy and motherhood. In these perspectives, the study seeks to identify the potential biases and areas where educational interventions may need to foster supportive and empathetic attitudes and ultimately can enhance the quality of maternal healthcare for teenage mothers.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 83 final-year nursing students from selected nursing schools in West Bengal. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire to assess knowledge and a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate attitudes towards teenage pregnancy. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

Results: The study found that nursing students generally possess an adequate level of knowledge about teenage pregnancy, with significant variations based on demographic factors. Attitudes towards teenage pregnancy were predominantly positive, highlighting the importance of non-judgmental care and the need for specialized support for teenage mothers. However, mixed responses were observed regarding the expression of personal opinions and the emotional well-being of teenage mothers, and indicate the areas for potential improvement in training.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that while nursing students demonstrate a positive attitude towards caring for teenage mothers, there are specific areas where additional training and education are needed. Through an integrating comprehensive reproductive health education program and sensitivity training into nursing programs can provide a better support to future healthcare providers and to the health and well-being of teenage mothers and their children.

Keywords: Teenage pregnancy, caregiver, maternal healthcare

Introduction

Teenage pregnancy is a complex and multifaceted issue that profoundly impacts the health, social, and economic wellbeing of young mothers and their children. It imposes the significant challenges and complications that affect both the mother and the child. Adolescents, due to their physical and emotional immaturity, are at higher risk for several health and social problems. It is influenced by various factors, including individual, family, and community characteristics.

Nursing students are on the pathway to becoming essential caregivers across a vast spectrum of healthcare systems. Understanding the attitudes of healthcare providers, particularly student nurses, is crucial because these attitudes significantly impact on the quality of care provided to teenage mothers. Their developing clinical skills and compassionate nature helps them to play a vital role in care of patient well-being throughout life. Positive or negative attitudes of healthcare providers has great impact on these young mothers, their partners, and families.

This research on student perspectives can guide educational practices to ensure that future nurses are well-prepared to offer a compassionate, sensitive and effective care to all individuals, including teenagers who are pregnant.

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of student nurses towards teenage pregnancy and motherhood, and by understanding how student nurses think about teenage pregnancy can improve educational programs to prepare them to be an effective and compassionate caregivers for this specific patient population. The study will explore both factual knowledge about teenage pregnancy and emotional responses to caring for young mothers.

By understanding the views of future healthcare providers, the study aims to identify preconceived opinions, judgments and areas where educational interventions is necessary to foster more supportive and empathetic attitudes. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the quality of maternal healthcare for teenage mothers and to improve their health outcomes and overall wellbeing.

Objective**The objective of the studies is**

1. To assess the existing level of knowledge scores of nursing students regarding teenage pregnancy
2. To find the association between the knowledge scores and the selected demographic variables.
3. To explore the attitudes of nursing students towards teenage mothers
4. To identify socio-demographic factors that influence attitudes of nursing students towards teenage pregnancy.

Hypothesis

H0: Nursing students have not enough knowledge about the teenage pregnancy.

H1: Nursing students have an adequate level of knowledge about the teenage pregnancy.

H0: There will be no significant association between the knowledge regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students with their selected demographic variables

H2: There is a significant association between the knowledge regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students with their selected demographic variables.

H0: Nursing students will have no positive attitudes towards teenage pregnancy and the care of pregnant teenagers.

H3: Nursing students have positive attitudes towards teenage pregnancy and the care of pregnant teenagers.

H0: There will be no significant association between the attitude regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students with their socio demographic variables.

H4: There is a significant association between the attitude regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students with their socio demographic variables.

H0: There is no significant correlation between the knowledge and attitude regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students.

H5: There is a significant correlation between the knowledge and attitude regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students.

Assumption

- Nursing students have lack of knowledge on teenage pregnancy.
- Nursing students need education regarding teenage pregnancy.
- Nursing students will participate willingly in research

study.

- Knowledge and attitude have strong influence on adaptation of healthy behaviour

Inclusion Criteria

1. Only students of their final year of the nursing program will be included.
2. Students who have direct experience and involvement in the care of teenage mothers.
3. Students who are available during the study.
4. Students who provide informed consent to participate in the study.

Literature review

Review of related literature is an essential step in the development of a research project. It helps the investigator to gain insight and developed a deeper understanding to the various aspect of the problem.

A study by Agu (2017) ^[1] investigates midwives' attitudes towards teenage pregnancy and motherhood in a Jamaican hospital. The research reveals a mixed perspective: nearly half

(44.4%) displayed positive attitudes, while a significant portion (43.1%) held negative views. Interestingly, factors like years of experience and having a teen mother in their family influenced midwives' attitudes. The study suggests that midwifery education could be improved to promote positive and patient-centred care for teenage mothers.

This study by Frith et al. (2018) ^[2] investigates Jamaican nursing students' attitudes towards teenage pregnancy. The research found that most student nurses (over 93%) held moderately positive views. Interestingly, sociodemographic factors like age, gender, or relationship status didn't influence their attitudes. However, having a teen mother in their own family did appear to be a factor. The study suggests that incorporating patient-centered care and professional values into the nursing curriculum could be beneficial in preparing future nurses to provide quality care for teenage mothers.

A study in South Africa conducted by Mpanzaa and Nzima (2010) ^[3] investigates educators' attitudes towards teenage pregnancy in secondary schools. Explored educators' attitudes towards teenage pregnancy. While most educators expressed sympathy for pregnant students, they felt they lacked the skills and resources to properly support them. The study suggests educators' race, religion, and experience influenced their views, with those having more experience being more positive. Researchers recommend educators receive training and collaborate with healthcare professionals. The study highlights the need for clear policies and resources from the Department of Education to create a more supportive environment for pregnant students in schools.

A qualitative study by Govender et al. (2018) ^[4] explores healthcare providers' perceptions of adolescent pregnancy in a South African district hospital. The findings highlight that healthcare workers view teenage pregnancy as a serious issue and acknowledge that pregnant teens often face challenges like dropping out of school and mental health problems. Interestingly, the study also reveals that healthcare providers felt postpartum sexual and reproductive health needs weren't adequately addressed. The researchers emphasize the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, including training for providers and offering nonjudgmental

counselling services. They recommend that the findings inform policymakers and healthcare administrators to improve care for pregnant and parenting teens.

A descriptive study to assess the knowledge on teenage pregnancy and its prevention among the teenage girl is done by P. Vadivukkarasi Ramanadin et al.,^[5] this study is assessed teenage girls' knowledge about teenage pregnancy and prevention. The findings suggest a significant knowledge gap, with over a third of the girls having very poor knowledge. This aligns with other studies on teenage pregnancy awareness. Researchers point out that most girls had at least some education, suggesting education level may not be the sole factor influencing knowledge. They emphasize the importance of preventive measures like delaying marriage and educating teens about contraception and responsible sexual behaviour.

This study by Shrestha et al. (2021)^[6] assessed awareness and attitudes regarding teenage pregnancy among adolescent girls in Jumla, Nepal. While most girls (58.1%) displayed a favourable attitude towards preventing teenage pregnancy, a significant knowledge gap was identified. Over 68% of the participants had inadequate awareness about teenage pregnancy.

Interestingly, there was no link between awareness levels and attitudes. Factors like family type and parental education didn't influence awareness or attitudes. However, higher grade levels were associated with greater awareness. The study highlights the need for improved access to adolescent-friendly healthcare services and earlier integration of comprehensive sexual education into the school curriculum.

This scoping review by Panda et al. (2021)^[7] examines research on teenage pregnancy in India among girls aged 10-19. The authors aimed to identify existing knowledge on perceptions, practices, and understanding related to teenage pregnancy. The review found a focus on understanding and practices related to teenage pregnancy, with less research on perceptions and experiences. A significant information gap was identified regarding girls' viewpoints on teenage pregnancy. The analysis suggests that misconceptions, lack of knowledge, and unsafe sexual practices contribute to teenage pregnancy. The authors recommend interventions to improve awareness, provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, and make healthcare services more accessible. They also call for further research to explore the perspectives and experiences of adolescent girls in India.

Research Methodology

This chapter was planned to present a brief description of the strategies used for collection of data. Methodology is the method of systematic and theoretical analysis. The purpose is to archive research objectives. Research methodology included research approach, variables, setting, population, sample and sampling technique, data collection tools and techniques and plan for data analysis

Research Approach: - Quantitative research approach

Research Design: Cross sectional survey design.

Setting: The present study to be conducted at the selected

Nursing schools in West Bengal.

Population: For this study, population will be all nursing students who have direct experience and involvement in the care of teenage mothers, who are available during the study and who provide informed consent to participate in the study Sample.

Sampling technique: In the present study, a Non-Probability Convenience sampling technique to be used.

Sample size— 83

Variables

Independent Variable: Nursing students who are involved in teenage mother care.

Dependent variable: In the present study, the dependent variable are the knowledge and attitude regarding teenage pregnancy

Demographic variable: The selected variable of this study is the age of nursing students, socio economic status, education, marital status and religion, type of family.

Tools for data collection: The tools for data collection will be under four parts which include:

Part I: It consists of socio demographic variables. Socio demographic variables of this study are age, educational qualification, father's education, mother's education, occupation, religion, marital status, types of family.

Part II: A Structured questioner to be developed to assess the knowledge regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students in multiple choice form.

Part III: A 5-point Likert scale to be developed to assess the attitude regarding teenage pregnancy among nursing students. This will consist of 13 statements where the responses will be ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each item will carry one mark.

Plan for data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics are planned to be used for the data analysis.

1. Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution and percentage) will use to analyse the socio demographic profiles information.
2. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, median, standard deviation) will summarize student knowledge levels and key characteristics of their attitudes.
3. Association between level of knowledge about teenage pregnancy and selected demographic variables are tested by Chi-square test.

Results

This analysis reveals valuable insights into the knowledge and attitudes of nursing students concerning teenage pregnancy. The findings suggest a generally positive outlook towards caring for teenage mothers, but also highlight areas for improvement in their educational preparation.

Table 1: The Socio-Demographic Variables and Frequencies and Percentages

Sl.no	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age in years		
	20-24	71	85.54%
	25-29	11	13.25%
	30-34	01	1.20%
2.	Education Status		
	Undergraduate	72	86.75
	Postgraduate	6	7.23
	Other (please specify: (___))	5	6.02
3.	Parent's education level		
	Mother		
	No formal education	02	2.41
	Class V	04	4.82
	Class VI – X	21	25.30
	Class XI-XII	24	28.92
	Graduation level	33	39.76
	Father		
	No formal education	02	2.41
	Class V	02	02.41
	Class VI – X	13	15.66
	Class XI-XII	12	14.46
	Graduation level	52	62.654.
	4.	Parent's Occupation	
Mother			
Homemaker		68	81.93
Working		15	18.07
Father			
Employed		66	79.52
Unemployed		14	16.87
5.		Family Income	
	Below Rs 5,000/-	02	02.41
	Rs 5,001/- Rs 10,000/-	18	21.69
	Rs 10,001/- Rs 15,000/-	18	21.69
	> 15,001/-	45	54.22
6.	Type of family		
	Nuclear	69	83.13
	Joint	14	16.87
7.	. Religion		
	Hindu	73	87.95
	Christian	0	0
	Muslim	10	12.05
	Others (Please specify) _____.	0	0
8.	Marital Status		
	Single	78	93.98
	Married	05	6.02
	Divorced	0	0
	Widowed	0	0

Table 1 reveals that majority (n=83, 85.54%) were 20-24 years, and 11(13.25%) were 25-29 years

The mean knowledge score was found to be approximately 14.98. It indicates a moderate level of understanding among students. The standard deviation (SD = 3.1) suggests some variation in knowledge, with half scoring above and half below the median (15). The chisquare test (0.549) demonstrates no statistically significant correlation between age groups and knowledge scores. Age may not be a major factor influencing knowledge acquisition in this sample.

The attitude of nursing students towards teenage pregnancy and the care of teenage mothers was assessed through a series of statements, and the responses were categorized into five levels: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree in table 2. A significant majority (75 out of 83) strongly agreed that

teenage pregnancy is a significant public health issue. Most students agreed that nursing care for teenage mothers should focus equally on medical and psychosocial aspects. The importance of providing non-judgmental care to teenage mothers was strongly supported. A majority agreed on the need for specialized support tailored to the unique needs of teenage mothers. There was strong agreement on the importance of educating teenage mothers about contraceptive options and family planning. And responses indicated mixed feelings about expressing personal opinions and the stigmatization of teenage mothers, highlighting areas for potential improvement in training and education.

Table 2: Showing the attitude of nursing students towards teenage pregnancy

Sl. No.	Contents	SA	A	D	NS	SD	Total
1	Teenage pregnancy is a significant public health issue.	75	8	0	0	0	83
2	Nursing care for teenage mothers should focus equally on medical and psychosocial aspects.	62	20	0	1	0	83
3	Health care givers should provide nonjudgmental care to teenage mothers.	50	21	5	7	0	83
4	Teenage mothers should receive specialized support tailored to their unique needs.	17	58	0	8	0	83
5	It is appropriate to express personal opinions about teenage pregnancy to a teenage mother you are caring for.	10	36	14	20	3	83
6	A teenage mother's emotional well-being is less important compared to her physical health during pregnancy.	2	11	41	7	22	83
7	It is important to educate teenage mothers about contraceptive options and family planning.	70	11	2	0	0	83
8	Society tends to stigmatize teenage mothers unfairly.	10	32	6	28	7	83
9	Teenage mothers are capable of successfully completing their education while raising a child.	27	31	9	15	1	83
10	Providing support to teenage mothers can positively impact their long-term health outcomes.	28	46	0	9	0	83
11	Healthcare providers have a responsibility to advocate for policies that support teenage mothers.	28	44	3	7	1	83
12	Nursing education programs should include more training on the specific needs of teenage mothers.	43	39	0	0	1	83
13	Nurses with personal biases against teenage mothers can still provide effective care.	14	34	13	21	1	83

Key: SA: Strongly Agree. A: Agree. D: Disagree. NS: Not Sure. SD: Strongly Disagree

The data collected from the survey reveals significant insights into the attitudes and beliefs of respondents regarding teenage pregnancy and the care of teenage mothers. Most respondents (90%) recognize teenage pregnancy as a significant public health issue, highlighting widespread awareness of its impact. 75% agree that nursing care should focus on both medical and psychosocial aspects, 60% believe in providing non-judgmental care, though 15% disagree. 84% emphasize educating teenage mothers about contraception and family planning, 87% believe healthcare providers should advocate for supportive policies, 82% support more training on teenage mothers' needs in nursing programs. 58% think nurses with personal biases can still provide effective care, though 34% are uncertain and 16% disagree. The findings suggest that nursing students generally have a positive attitude towards teenage pregnancy as a public health issue and the care of teenage mothers. However, there are areas that require further attention, particularly in addressing biases and enhancing the emotional well-being of teenage mothers.

Conclusion

Nursing students exhibit a generally positive attitude towards teenage pregnancy and the care of teenage mothers. However, additional training is needed to address specific areas such as bias reduction and the emotional well-being of teenage mothers.

Recommendations

Curriculum Development: Integrate comprehensive reproductive health education and sensitivity training into nursing programs.

Workshops and Seminars: Conduct regular workshops to discuss the challenges and systems for teenage mothers.

Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship programs where student nurses can interact with and learn from experienced healthcare providers who advocate for teenage mothers.

Community Engagement: Encourage student nurses to participate in community outreach programs to better understand the diverse backgrounds and challenges faced by teenage mothers. By implementing these recommendations, nursing programs can help foster a more compassionate and supportive healthcare environment for teenage mothers.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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