

TEENAGE PREGNANCY SITUATION IN THAILAND

Suwattana Varakamin, Preecha Chamwithilert
and Suwaporn Thavisith

ABSTRACT

This study is a survey research. The objective of the study are: to study situation, factors related to teenage pregnancy (under 20 years of age), and to find protocol to reduce teen pregnancy. The 1,289 Subjects are pregnant women aged under 20 years who attend antenatal care at Center Hospital or Community Hospital in 8 provinces: Lopburi, Srakeaw, Maharakam, Kampangphet, Udornthani, Lumpoon, Kanchanaburi, and Surajthani. They were interviewed by health personnel who worked in those hospitals. In-depth interview was also used to interview 80 pregnant women (10 pregnant women from each province)who answered the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Response rate is 99.54%. The results of this study reveal that family of pregnant mostly women had more than two siblings. Their parents were labors earning approximately 3,000 Bath/month. They had no any saving. Most of pregnant women finished their education at grade 9 and grade 12. They had to leave school before finished to earn money for their families. The age at first marriage for this group is between 18 and 19 years old. Factors influenced teenage pregnancy are: attitude towards pregnancy, acceptance from friends and family, and environment. Attitude of having a baby depend upon acceptance of pregnancy from husband and family, and risk of pregnancy. Rating on sources of information about risk of pregnancy among teenage are in moderate level. Those sources are village broadcast, newspapers, radio, television, and relatives or friends. These pregnant women lacked of knowledge on sex education, family planning, and contraception. Pregnant women did not realize problems and risk of teenage pregnancy because they have never seen any abnormal cases. They believed that having a baby will help them to relax, children will be a source of income in the future, gender of children is not a matter if the children is a good one, children is a center of happiness. The concern on having a baby depend on husband's decision. They didn't realize any problems that will follow after having a baby, such as an increase of spending for a baby, a plan for child education, etc.

In conclusion, factors related to teenage pregnancy are family, environment, education, occupation, income, and economic status of each family. The parents had to work to make a living. They had no time to take care of their children, especially to talk about sex

education. Information that they received from friends may not be accurate, especially on sex education, contraception and family planning. In addition, they had low level of education and no experience on the example of danger of teenage pregnancy.

Recommendations from this study include: there should be antenatal care unit for teenage pregnancy in hospital or arrange this group under high risk pregnancy clinic for special counseling on risk of teenage pregnancy; and disseminate information on risks of teenage pregnancy toward mother and baby through various channels that teenage are interested, such as village broadcast, radio, television, magazine, and newspapers. In terms of policy, policy on teaching family life education in formal education system should be clear. Teachers should received training on this issue. In addition, the expansion of mandatory formal education should be considered to keep teenage in education system and to prepare them for adulthood. Furthermore, occupational training should be conducted for those who finished only mandatory education or those who live in villages or communities for skilled development. Hence, teenage will not leave their villages or communities to seek for jobs in cities, and will not be in the lonely environment that encourage them to get marry early.