

Abortion and Unmet Need for Contraception in Tanzania—the Role of Male Partners in Teenage Induced Abortion in Dar Es Salaam

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents information from 150 teenage abortion patients on their knowledge and use history of available contraceptive methods, and the role played by male partners in facilitating induced abortions in Dar Es Salaam. The sample was screened from a larger data set consisting of 965 women admitted with abortion complications over 45 consecutive days. Findings of the study revealed that the majority of young adolescents (88%) did not know of any method they could use to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. Further, although the majority of the partners of these teenage girls advised abortion, less than one third of the men were willing to identify an abortionist, pay the fees required, or provide assistance when complications developed. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 1998; 2 (2):108–121)

RÉSUMÉ

Avortements et besoins de contraceptifs non-satisfaits en Tanzanie. Le rôle des partenaires mâles dans les avortements provoqués parmi les adolescentes de Dar Es Salaam. Ce document fournit des informations sur 150 patientes adolescentes ayant subi des avortements. Ces dernières étaient interrogées sur leurs connaissances, leur usage de méthodes contraceptives disponibles, et le rôle joué par les partenaires hommes dans l'arrangement des avortements provoqués. L'échantillon avait été sélectionné à partir d'un plus large ensemble constitué de 965 femmes qui avaient été admises pour des complications des suites d'avortement et ce pour une durée de plus de 45 jours consécutifs. Les découvertes de l'étude ont révélé que la majorité des adolescentes (88%) ne connaissait aucune méthode qui leur aurait permis d'éviter une grossesse indésirée. Par ailleurs, bien que la majorité des partenaires des adolescentes leur avaient conseillé l'avortement, moins d'un tiers de ces partenaires était disposé à identifier un avorteur, payer les frais d'avortement ou épauler les adolescentes en cas de complications des suites de l'avortement. (*Rev Afr Santé Reprod* 1998; 2 (2):108–121)

KEY WORDS: *Teenage abortion, contraception, role of men, Tanzania*

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either school or the family home, may have been the reason that a greater proportion of students and dependants were able to inform their male partners about their predicament.

Further qualitative studies are required to determine the types of sexual relationships in which different categories of teenage girls (especially by age and education) become involved, and the power relationships that exist between them and their male partners. More qualitative studies targeting men are necessary to gain an understanding of the determinants motivating these men to indulge in sexual relationships with younger teenage girls, and what precautions are taken by these men to minimize the consequences of their sexual behaviours.

In addition, the problems of teenage sexuality need to be brought to the attention of parents, religious leaders, key community leaders, as well as policy makers, who to a large extent are currently "coping" with the problem by denying its existence or blaming the victims.

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