

Abortion: behaviour of adolescents in two districts in Kenya

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Abstract:

In Kenya the reported high rates of unwanted pregnancies (more than 90%), among adolescents have subsequently resulted in unsafely induced abortions with the associated high morbidity and mortality rates. To evaluate the adolescents' behaviour regarding induced abortion. A cross-sectional, prospective study done from July 1995 to June 1996. Schools and health facilities in Kiambu and Nairobi districts in Kenya. Interviews were conducted among adolescents aged 10-19 years in schools at the two districts and selected using a multi-stage random sampling procedure, as well as adolescent girls at two hospitals and two clinics in the immediate post-abortion period. The number of adolescents health programmes, aimed at reducing the dangers of unsafely induced abortion, which are designed and subsequently implemented. Demographic and health data, as well as data on behaviour regarding induced abortion were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The study sample comprised 1820 adolescents. These were 1048 school girls (SG), 580 school boys (SB) and 192 post-abortion (PA). Many adolescents were aware of abortion dangers, with the awareness being significantly lower among the SB whose girlfriends (GF) had aborted than those whose GF had not ($p < 0.01$). The practice of abortion was reported among 3.4% SG, 9.3% SBs' GF and 100% PA. Direct and indirect costs of abortion were heavy on the girls. Knowledge of the abortion dangers had no influence on the choice of the abortionist. Abortion encounter positively influenced approval by the adolescents, of abortion for pregnant school girls ($p < 0.01$). Despite the costs and awareness of abortion dangers by adolescents, they will take risks.