

Teenage mothers in Kenya: seduced, coerced and at risk of HIV

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Abstract:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is affecting the sub-Saharan Africa more severely than other parts of the world, with 60% of global AIDS cases occurring in Africa. This article explores predisposing factors for teenage pregnancy which have implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS and STIs among adolescents in Kenya. In a recent study in one district, four factors were found to be prominent in predisposing teenage pregnancy: having multiple partners, sex for money, seduction by teachers, and coercion by friends and relatives. In-depth interviews of a sub-group of the subjects revealed some issues that are of great concern in the context of the current efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Attention so far has been on creating awareness but risk behaviours in adolescents are common, with the attendant dangers of unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other STIs. This article seeks to highlight some of the factors that affect risky behaviours even in fully aware teenagers. It highlights a need for specific interventions beyond awareness creation.