



# Investigating Support for Teenage Mothers- A Pilot Study



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## Abstract:

Despite its prevalence in low-income communities, teenage pregnancy affects all sectors of society. However, our society has a stigma against teenage pregnancy, which leaves many teenage mothers to endure it on their own. Therefore, this research will focus on finding resources to support teenage mothers through their pregnancy journey. As part of this study, survey questions will be administered to women who were teenage mothers once. In addition, interviews will be conducted afterward. Currently, there are no significant data available as the research study is still in preparation. However, this research will provide access to resources available to teenage mothers.

## Literature Review:

- Teenage pregnancy is more likely to be a perpetuating cycle within a family.<sup>3</sup>
- Teenage pregnancy is causing an increase in domestic violence, substance use, mental health disorders, sexually transmissible infections (STIs), financial stress, and homelessness.<sup>1</sup>
- Teenage mothers are more likely to have depression than adult mothers.<sup>2</sup>
  - Teenage mothers are more likely to abuse and neglect their kids.<sup>2</sup>
  - Their children are more likely to develop problems in intellectual development and psychosocial functioning.<sup>2</sup>
- A study found that 20% of 16-year-old participants were unaware of where to access mental health services.<sup>2</sup>
  - 11% of the participants stated that they were unable to afford the care.<sup>2</sup>

## Method:

- **Surveying Participants**
  - Teenage Mothers (Currently or within the last 5 years)
  - Lived/Reside in Indiana
  - At least 18 years old
- **Interview**
  - Interviewing participants via Zoom.
  - Record and transcript the interview.



## Pilot Study:

- The pilot study was conducted with three pilot participants and it include three surveys and two interviews.
  - Two of them were 20 years old and the third pilot participant was 18 years old.
  - Only two of the participants were interviewed as the third participant did not give consent.
- **Survey:**
  - All three of them completed 19 questions in under 20 minutes.
  - Survey topics discussed:
    - Healthcare Services
    - Their support system
    - Fundamental resources needed for their pregnancy
- **Interview:**
  - Discussed desired resources and support.
  - Shared personal experiences.
  - Offered advice to other teenage mothers.



## Learning:

- Use a different approach to how I ask survey questions to get more comprehensive answers.
- Explore the relationship between the participant and their partner more deeply.
- Narrow down on two types of support systems: emotional support and financial support.

## Result:

Participant 3: "Yes and no."

Participant 1: "Yes, absolutely."

Participant 2: "Not really but I felt irresponsible because of my age."

Do you think that you were treated/talked to like a child by your doctor because of your age?

Participant 2: "Not at all, he was also a teen who did not know anything about pregnancy."

Participant 1: "Nothing."

Participant 3: "He was shocked at first but step up and help me take care of the baby by feeding or playing. He also helped financially as well."

What contributions did the father of your child provide during your pregnancy journey?

Participant 3: "I shared it to my sister who was mainly just in disbelief and questioned whether the test was actually liable. Along with my sister I would say that her reaction did make me doubt the test and overall I was just disappointed in my self in general."

Participant 2: "I shared it to my close friend and she was super supportive about it."

Participant 1: "Shared it with my best friend, she was very supportive and helped me mentally and emotionally throughout my pregnancy journey. Her reactions helped me to know that I am not alone."

Who did you share it to and how did their reaction impact you? Did their reactions have any emotional impact on you?

## Future Work:

- In the upcoming semester, participants will be recruited from online platforms such as Reddit and Quora.
- I will be distributing a survey in the Hakha language to the Chin Community in Indiana to reach the Chin population residing in Indiana.

## Reference:

- <sup>1</sup>Mann, L., Bateson, D., & Black, K. (2020, June). Teenage pregnancy. Australian journal of general practice. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32464731/>
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- <sup>2</sup>Muzik, M., Kirk, R., Alfara, E., Jonika, J., & Waddell, R. (2015). Teenage mothers of black and minority ethnic origin want access to a range of mental and physical health support: A participatory research approach. Health Expectations, 19(2), 403–415. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12364>
- <sup>3</sup>Teenage pregnancy: The impact of maternal adolescent childbearing and older sister's teenage pregnancy on a younger sister. BMC pregnancy and childbirth. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4880827/>