

Teenage pregnancy and parenting is a health issue in New Zealand for two main reasons [...]

I am going to explain three determinants of health that influence teenage pregnancy/parenting in NZ. These are cultural, economic and social.

Culturally [...]

In terms of the economic determinant [...]

The social determinant is one of the key factors influencing teenage pregnancy and parenthood in New Zealand, as proven by a lot of research into the issue in this country. Firstly, it has been shown that teenage pregnancy is more likely for girls who have not done well at school, who have dropped out of school early, or who do not have clear goals and plans for the future (1). Because of this sort of schooling experience, girls may see becoming a parent as their best option, or do not have career goals to act as a protective factor against getting pregnant. Therefore they might be more likely to get pregnant, decide against an abortion and become a teenage mother. The other part of this determinant is the home background of the teenager. Statistics and research shows that teenage mothers in NZ are much more likely to also be the child of a teenage mother (1). Obviously the influence of home life and upbringing is important here. The teenager may get pregnant as it is the 'normal' thing to do in her family, rather than break the cycle.

1

There are implications of teenage pregnancy and parenthood for well-being at the personal, interpersonal and societal levels.

Personally, the health issue impacts upon the well-being of the girl who gets pregnant. The girl might drop out of school or will have to take a break from school. If there is no teenage parent unit near her, then it will be difficult for her to go back to school after the baby is born. This means that her options for the future might be limited. She will also have changes to her social life – she may lose friends because of this. Becoming a mum at a young age may affect her self-esteem and she may become depressed, especially if she does not have a lot of support. Our guest speaker, Olivia from the parent unit attached to our school, said that she felt “alone and scared” during her pregnancy and that this made her doubt herself and her ability to raise a child (3). On the other hand, there are some possible positive effects, such as the teenager maturing and feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment. Olivia said that after her initial fears, she developed some confidence and now feels happy with her choices and her ability to be a good mum (3).

2

Interpersonally [...]

The well-being of society is affected [...]

Two strategies to address the health issue are to provide better support for teenage mothers through teen parent units and to provide access to a range of health services for teenagers.

The first strategy is to provide better support for teenage mothers by having better access to teenage parent units in schools across New Zealand. These units are important because they provide teenage mums with the opportunity to return to school and get qualifications, while her child is looked after on-site. Other supports are accessed through the unit, for example WINZ and Plunket. By returning to school, the girl will get support from teachers and service providers, meet other mothers, and hopefully gain qualifications. This links to the social determinant of not achieving well at school. It also links to the economic determinant because if she gains qualifications, she will be more likely to earn a good income to support herself and her child. This reflects social justice as it promotes fair and inclusive access to education and services.

3

The second strategy is to [...]

Note that a chart was provided by the student to show bibliographic details for the references used in the analysis.