

# Title: Adolescent sexual behaviour and childbearing in Cameroon: an analysis of trends, determinants and health consequences

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## **Context:**

The socioeconomic context in which young Cameroonian differs from the experience of the precedents generations. The reproductive health needs of adolescents have been largely ignored by the existing health services a long time ago in Cameroon. Therefore, there is a need to provide such services and to undertake research in understanding adolescent sexual behaviour and reproductive health. Thus, as the reproductive health of adolescents is of growing concern today, more information is needed about the factors associated with these behaviors.

## **Research questions:**

This paper first highlights the recent trends and health consequences of adolescent childbearing in Cameroon. Differences in risks of adolescent childbearing by place of residence, marital status and level of education are also assessed.. It discusses adolescent sexually and the factors that influence their sexual behaviour. It also discusses adolescent childbearing and contraceptive use. Finally, it examines the consequences of adolescent sexuality and childbearing and concludes with a discussion outlining the scope for further research.

## **Methods:**

Data on social, demographic and economic characteristics and sexual and reproductive behaviour based on the 2004, 2011 and 2018 CDHS are used.. These surveys data have been reinforce by recent interview process which was designed to encourage open discussion about reproductive matter. Multivariate techniques were used to analyze the effects of these characteristics on early initiation of intercourse, sex with multiple partners, casual sex and nonuse of condoms.

### **Results:**

The findings indicate that more than 50% of adolescent births occur out of marriage. A higher proportion of rural and less-educated women had a pregnancy or a child before age 20, compared with urban and better-educated women, respectively. The trend analysis on teenage childbearing shows that a substantial decline in adolescent childbearing has occurred in Cameroon, particularly in rural areas between the mid-1990s and early part of the new century. pregnancy-related complications are also higher among teenage women relative to older women. Neonatal mortality is also found to be much higher among children born to teenage mothers than among those born to older mothers. Although abortion is highly restricted in Cameroon, it is not uncommon among urban adolescent.

### **Conclusions:**

From the preceding analysis, it is evident that the sexual and reproductive health of Adolescents has emerged as an issue of great concern in Cameroon.

(a) The widening gap between sexual maturity and age at marriage, which results in premarital sexual activities among adolescents in many countries and areas in the region;

(b) The continuing prevalence of adolescent marriage and low contraceptive use During adolescence, resulting in a high rate of adolescent fertility. The adverse health consequences of adolescent fertility for both mothers and children include the high rate of maternal mortality and infant mortality. The vulnerability of adolescent girls to STDs, including HIV/AIDS, and early childbearing also has a negative impact on the educational prospects of girls, including pregnancy-related school dropout, thereby.

Adolescent with few economic resources and those with less stable living environments are more likely than other youths to engage in sexual behaviors that put them at risk of having child contracting STD or HIV. Improving the living conditions of families, especially those headed by single women, could help curb the spread of these phenomena