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## STEMMING THE TIDE OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE THROUGH PEER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*Teenage pregnancy, which cuts across different states of Nigeria, is a pervasive social practice in today's global societies. This paper investigates the contributions of peer education in curbing teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in the Edu-Agbara community, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study employed quantitative research that uses a questionnaire aimed at extracting data on the spread of teenage pregnancy, the issues surrounding it, and causes and effects on secondary school girls. This study is premised on Family Development theory as adopted for analysis and discussion on stemming the tide of teenage pregnancy. Findings revealed that on the Socioeconomic characteristics of parents' perspectives, there are more of female parents (70%) than male parents (30%) residing in the Edu-Agbara community. Also revealed that most parents of 40% were single parents; 20% were divorcees aged between 18 – 25 years; while (and 38%) were low-income earners, with secondary school leaving certificates. It was observed that there were more female students in secondary schools like Edu-Agbara Community High School (60% females than males), Jhntech School (47% females than males), NASDEC Royal Schools (63% females than males), and Graceland School (67% females than males). Hence, the paper recommends that parents and teachers should be concerned about the well-being of teenagers especially the girl child through education about sex and sexuality and the danger inherent.*

**Keywords:** Edu-Agbara, Peer Education, Pregnancy, Stemming, Teenage.

### Introduction

Behavioural change, being a crucial aspect of communication for development is inevitable with its ubiquitous nature across all aspects of human endeavours. Such behavioural act plays out around procreation which is peculiar to women. In realising this, basic measures become prerequisites for every woman to be involved in procreation behaviour. In some societies, particularly in Africa, the act of procreation is the responsibility of grown-up young adults who

are physically, economically, emotionally, spiritually, and at large psychologically mature (Alabi & Oni, 2017). For this reason, the marriage act is particularly restricted to mature-minded adults and is greatly admired in our contemporary societies. But the observed occurrence that is prevalent in both advanced and not fully developed societies globally is such that, girls as young as 13-19 years who are sexually active occasionally become pregnant and give birth at a disturbing rate. Briggs (2001) and Onuzulike (2003) attest to the fact that teenagers become sexually active at an early age with corresponding high fertility. This condition is widely referred to as teenage pregnancy.

Given the above, Akella & Jordan (2014) maintain that teenage pregnancy occurs among under aged girls (usually between the ages of thirteen to nineteen years). This implies that pregnancy practices by young girls/under aged girls are not lawfully accepted in societies. Rather, it is generally believed that only female adults should get pregnant, but it has become a common practice in this contemporary society. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2001) posits that "a teenage girl usually between the ages of 13 and 19 years, becoming pregnant "is known as teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy may lead to stillbirth or termination of pregnancy (Anteneh & Telake, 2018). In many countries of the world, teenage pregnancies are more likely to occur among students commonly driven by sexual violence, poverty, poor parenting truancy, and lack of adequate information and education on sexual activities (WHO, 2020).

Robson and Berthoud (2003) describe teenage pregnancy as the potential risk of sexual activity for girls and as a social menace connected to poverty. A major consequence of these behavioural acts that increase sexual activities among teenagers is out-of-wedlock pregnancies that may result in abortion, childbirth, or even death (Alabi, 2017). Pregnancy at whatever stage in life can be a life-changing experience that cuts across boundaries of race, educational attainment, and socio-economic status (Kost, Henshaw, and Carlin, 2010). On this note, motherhood places demand on one's life which were hitherto non-existent before the birth of the woman. Given this, when a girl who should be in school becomes pregnant, her entire life could be altered completely, as her hopes and aspirations could be shattered. Teenage parents according to Kost, Henshaw, and Carlin, (2010) are parents between the ages of 13 and 19 years.

Teenage being a transitional phase is growth and development between childhood and adulthood. It is a period of adolescence between 13 to 19 years old with spectacular physical, social, and psychological reproductive health characteristics (Kassa, Arowojulu, Odukogbe & Worku, 2018). During adolescence or teenage years, several issues such as emotional and physical separation from parents arise. Most times, this sense of separation from parents is required by teenagers for the establishment of personal values and experience on upsurge of sexual feelings (Gyan, 2013).

In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) further defines teenage as a period of adolescence which is a phase of life requiring special attention. Teenagers are young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years old. It is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights. It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will enhance enjoying the adolescent years and attaining adult roles.

WHO (2016) pinpoints preterm labour, intrauterine growth retardation, low birth weight, neonatal death, obstructed labour, genital fistula, and eclampsia as parts of the issues and challenges associated with teenage pregnancy. In some situations, the rupturing of the womb

caused by unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted infections, sexual violence, and limited access to efficient medical services are also parts of the negative consequences of teenage pregnancy.

The noticeable effects of teenage pregnancy in many societies occur as a result of numerous factors as identified by Ochin, Che-Chi, and Lawoko (2019) to be low socioeconomic status, early exposure to sexual activities, increased accessibility to social media, sharing of pornographic pictures and videos, lack of sex education and decreased supervision by adults.

From the various explanations, discussions, and assertions made so far, it can be deduced that teenage pregnancy is spreading widely among young ones regarded as "leaders of tomorrow" especially in Nigerian secondary. This problem does not come all alone but is backed up by numerous factors ranging from social, economic, and psychological factors. Hence, there is a need to resolve it before our teenagers begin to lose their treasured values. This study therefore focuses on investigating the stemming tide of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in the Edu-Agbara community of Ogun state, Nigeria. In this regard, associated causes and adverse outcomes are the crux of the issues that will serve as pointers to addressing the problem before decision-makers, education stakeholders, parents (wards), and government.

### **The Problem**

Teenage, a time when teenagers are expected to acquire education, and skills needed for the future. On the contrary, many teenage girls and boys engage in premarital sex, which exposes them to the risks of unplanned pregnancies (Umeano, 2003). Pregnancy, which should be a thing of joy is usually welcome at such an immature age and in wedlock. On the contrary, it is most unwelcome when it occurs during the teen years, that is, when the individual should be acquiring skills in the formal or non-formal organization. Onuzulike (2002) indicates poverty, pornography, social media, and peer influence as some of the factors responsible for teenage pregnancy.

From the foregoing, there seems to be a dearth of attention on pregnancy in this part of society, especially in this present time. Accordingly, this study investigates the stemming tide and spread nature of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students with a focus on students in Edu-Agbara, Ogun state, Nigeria.

This aims to find solutions to the following research questions:

- a.) What are the perceptions of secondary school students on teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in the Edu-Agbara community of Ogun state, Nigeria?
- b.) What are the attitudes of parents towards teenage pregnancy among secondary school students in the Edu-Agbara community?
- c.) What are the causative factors of teenage pregnancy in the Edu-Agbara community?
- d.) What are the effects of teenage pregnancy on teenagers and society?

### **Literature Review**

Kassa, Arowojulu, Odukogbe, and Worku (2018) explicate that teenage or adolescent pregnancy is the occurrence of pregnancy in girls aged between 10–19 years. The above definition shows that adolescent pregnancy is a major public health problem, particularly in Africa. This is further associated with high maternal and child morbidity. In consonance with the

aforementioned, WHO (2014) reports indicate that the global adolescent birth rate was 49%; with 1000 girls aged 15 to 19 years old; with more than 70,000 adolescent girls dying annually because of related complications. Onuzulike (2003) supports the explanations of Kassa et al. (2018) by observing that teenage pregnancy interferes with expectations regarding education, self-realization, and economic prosperity among the affected teenagers. Ukekwe (2001) describes it further as an unplanned conception in under aged girls which leads to stress. It implies that such a girl has to restructure her roles because she is inadequately prepared for parenthood.

According to the National Statistics England Report (2015), teenage pregnancy refers to the number of conceptions per thousand young women who are under 18 years of age, which may lead to stillbirth or termination of pregnancy. For some young women, having a child may amount to a positive turning point in their lives. For others, it may pose a great challenge and can result to poor outcomes for both teenage parents and children. Teenage pregnancy and early motherhood have a generational impact, and it is linked to poor educational achievement for the mother, leading to poor employment prospects, poor physical and mental health for teenage mothers and children, social isolation, and poverty.

In supporting the explanations of the researchers above, Nwosu (2005) submits that there is a global increase in teenage pregnancies. The above scholar observes that more than 14 million adolescents give birth each year, thus contributing roughly 10% of the world's total number of births. Ukekwe (2001) further notes that many of these babies are unwanted by their teen mothers. Hence, such babies suffer from starvation, sicknesses, homelessness, and abandonment among other complications.

Therefore, Brown (2001) submits that teenage students who become pregnant rarely go back to school, most of them end up as school dropouts in the society.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Family Development Theory**

This study is premised on Family development theory which is “the probability of transitions to an outcome state, determined by the duration of time from the beginning of an event,” (White, 1991). Thus, the event of becoming sexually active determines the probability of becoming pregnant. Similarly, age-graded social norms may also determine the probability of subsequent transitions. Hence, with the decline in the age of first intercourse, social norms might force more teens into early sexual activity as observed in the Edu-Agbara community of Ogun state, Nigeria. White (1991) further states that the timing of events can be discussed in terms of the age of one individual. This also includes the duration of the dyad and the chronological date. In terms of teen pregnancy, the duration of the dating relationship and the period of the timing of becoming sexually active depend on the age of the person, that is, a study of teens between the ages 13 – 19 years in the Edu-Agbara community. Thus, if the social norm is to be sexually active because of the period in which individuals grow up, then they are considered deviant if they do not behave within the norms of the sub-culture.

### **Research Methods**

The study employed quantitative research that uses a questionnaire aimed at extracting data on the spread of teenage pregnancy, the issues surrounding it, and causes and effects on secondary school girls. The questionnaire method was substantially adopted because it is the appropriate tool that could be used in extracting information on the spread of teenage pregnancy behavioural for this study. This becomes significant by ways of questioning the specified respondents with a

choice of answers devised for a survey or statistical study. Five (5) secondary schools and five residential areas in the Edu-Agbara community of Ogun state, Nigeria were purposively selected to form the population for the study. The required data requested in answering the research questions that availed the research aim and objectives of this study were extracted from one hundred and fifty (150) students and fifty (50) teachers from the five selected schools and fifty (50) parents selected from five (5) residential areas in Edu-Agbara community of Ogun state.

Data acquired after administering a questionnaire among selected respondents in the study areas were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). This statistical package was used to run the analysis which was used to present the discussion by using counts and percentage characteristics.

## Results

Below are the data generated from the questionnaires used for this study.

### Socio-Economic Characteristics of Parents and Secondary School Teachers

Table 1: Gender of parents:

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	15	30
Female	35	70
Total	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above revealed that 70% of the total populations of parents selected for this study are females, while 30% are males.

Table 2: Gender of secondary school teachers:

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	18	36
Female	32	64
Total	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 above revealed that 64% of the total populations of teachers selected for this study are females while 36% are males.

Table 3: Marital status of parents:

Marital Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Married	17	34
Single parent	20	40
Divorced	10	20
Widow	3	6
Total	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The analysis presented in table 3 above revealed that 34% of the total number of parents selected in this study are married, 40% are single parents, 20% are divorced while 6% are widows.

### Socio-Economic Characteristics of Secondary School Students

Table 3: Gender of secondary school students:

SCHOOL	GENDER	TOTAL
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	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	FREQUENCY (f)	%	FREQUENCY (f)	%	FREQUENCY (f)	%
Edu-Agbara community secondary school	12	40	18	60	30	100
JOHTECH secondary school	16	53	14	47	30	100
NASDEC secondary school	11	37	19	63	30	100
Graceland secondary school	10	33	20	67	30	100
Stelinn international school	16	53	14	47	30	100

Table 3 above revealed that 40% of the total population of secondary school students selected in Edu-Agbara community secondary school are males while 60% are females; 53% are males and 47% females in JOHTECH secondary school; 37% are males and 63% are females in NASDEC secondary school; 33% are males and 67% females in Graceland secondary school; while 53% are males and 47% are females in Stelinn international school.

Table 4: Age of secondary school students

SCHOOL	AGE (YEARS)						TOTAL	
	13 – 15		16 – 18		Above 18		FREQ (f)	%
	FREQ (f)	%	FREQ (f)	%	FREQ (f)	%		
Edu-Agbara community secondary school	10	33	15	50	5	17	30	100
JOHTECH secondary school	12	40	18	60	0	0	30	100
NASDEC secondary school	17	57	13	43	0	0	30	100
Graceland secondary school	11	37	19	63	0	0	30	100
Stelinn international	28	93	2	7	0	0	30	100

school									
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Table 4 above reveal the age range of secondary school students selected for this study as 33% of 13 – 15years students, 50% of 16 – 18years students and 17% of students above 18years in Edu-Agbara community secondary school; 40% of 13 – 15years students, 60% of 16 – 18years students and 0% of students above 18years in JOHTECH secondary school; 57% of 13 – 15years students, 43% of 16 – 18years students and 0% of students above 18years in NASDEC secondary school; 37% of 13 – 15years students, 63% of 16 – 18years students and 0% of students above 18years in Graceland secondary school; and 93% of 13 – 15years students, 7% of 16 – 18years students and 0% of students above 18years in Stelinn International School.

Table 5: Class of secondary school students:

As shown in Table 4.4 above, most respondents grouped as secondary school students are 26% S.S.3 students while 19% are S.S. 2 students, 17% are S.S.1 students, 15% are J.S.S 3 students, 13% are J.S.S 2 students and 10% are J.S.S 1 students.

### Respondents Perception of Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy among Secondary School Students

This section aimed to determine how parents, teachers, and students residing in the five selected areas in the Edu-Agbara community, perceive the prevalence of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students. The weighted mean score measure for the perception of prevalence of pregnancy was employed on a scale of very serious, serious, tolerable, not existing; while perception of attitude to teenage pregnancy was measured on a weighted mean score of satisfied, very satisfied, not good, and not acceptable.

Table 6: Parents' perception of teenage pregnancy prevalence among secondary school students.

LOCALITY	Perception of Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy									
	Very Serious		Serious		Tolerable		Not Existing		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Alamala- Edu junction	5	50	4	40	1	10	0	0	10	100
Idorawa Gasline, Edu.	4	40	2	20	1	10	3	30	10	100
Paapa, Edu.	5	50	3	30	2	20	0	0	10	100
Ago-Titun, Edu.	1	10	2	20	6	60	1	10	10	100
Olowoporoku, Edu.	3	30	2	20	2	20	3	30	10	100

Table 6 above shows the perception of parents on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the Edu-Agbara community. The prevalence of teenage pregnancy is perceived to be very serious in Alamala–Edu junction (50%), Paapa (50%) and Idorawa Gasline (40%), and Olowoporoku (30%) in the Edu-Agbara community whereas it is perceived to be 60% tolerable in Ago-titunarea of Edu-Agbara community.



Table 7: Teachers' perception of Teenage Pregnancy Prevalence among secondary school students.

SCHOOL	Perception of Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy									
	Very Serious		Serious		Tolerable			Not Existing	Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Edu-Agbara community secondary school	8	80	1	10	1	10	0	0	10	100
JOHTECH secondary school	2	20	1	10	1	10	6	60	10	100
NASDEC secondary school	1	10	1	10	1	10	7	70	10	100
Graceland secondary school	2	20	1	10	1	10	6	60	10	100
Stelinn international school	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100	10	100

Table 7 above shows the perception of teachers on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Edu-Agbara community. The prevalence of teenage pregnancy is perceived to be 80% very serious in Edu-Agbara community secondary school, 20% serious in JOHTECH secondary school, 10% serious in NASDEC secondary school, 20% serious in Graceland secondary school and 0% serious in Stelinn International school.

Table 8: Students' perception of teenage pregnancy prevalence among secondary school students.

SCHOOL	Perception of Teenage Pregnancy Prevalence									
	Very Serious		Serious		Tolerable			Not Existing	Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Edu-Agbara community secondary school	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0	10	100
JOHTECH	2	20	1	10	1	10	6	60	10	100



secondary school										
NASDEC secondary school	1	10	1	10	1	10	7	70	10	100
Graceland secondary school	1	10	1	10	1	10	7	70	10	100
Stelinn international school	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100	10	100

Table 8 above shows the perception of secondary school students on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Edu-Agbara community. The prevalence of teenage pregnancy is perceived to be 70% very serious in Edu-Agbara community secondary school, 20% serious in JOHTECH secondary school, 10% serious in NASDEC secondary school, 10% serious in Graceland secondary school and 0% serious in Stelinn International school.

#### **Respondents' Perception of Causes of Teenage Pregnancy among Secondary School Students**

Table 9: Parents' perception of the causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students.

<b>Causes of Teenage Pregnancy</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
pressure	11	22
influence	9	18
of parental care	10	20
age drinking and drug abuse	6	12
g violence	3	6
y	4	8
ood environment	2	4
of sex education	3	6
l abuse and rape	1	2

hawking	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 9 above indicates that 22% of the total population of parents selected in the Edu-Agbara community are of the perception that teenage pregnancy among secondary school students is caused by peer pressure, 18%; media influence, 20%; lack of parental care, 12%; teenage drinking and drug abuse, 6%; dating violence, 8%; poverty, 4%; childhood environment, 6%; lack of sex education, while 2%; sexual abuse and rape as well as street hawking.

Table 10: Teacher's perception of the causes of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students.

<b>Causes of Teenage Pregnancy</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
ressure	12	24
influence	10	20
of parental care	8	16
ge drinking and drug abuse	6	12
g violence	3	6
y	4	8
ood environment	2	4
of sex education	3	6
l abuse and rape	1	2
hawking	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 above indicates that 24% of the total population of parents selected in the Edu-Agbara community are of the perception that teenage pregnancy among secondary school students is caused by peer pressure, 20% is caused by media influence, 16% is caused by lack of parental care, 12% is caused by teenage drinking and drug abuse, 6% is caused by dating violence, 8% is caused by poverty, 4% is caused by childhood environment, 6% is caused by lack of sex education, while 2% is caused by sexual abuse and rape as well as street hawking.

#### **Attitude of Respondents to Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy among Secondary School Students**

Table 11: Parents' attitude to the prevalence of teenage pregnancy among secondary school

students

LOCALITY	Attitude of Parents to Teenage Pregnancy										
	Satisfied		Very Satisfied		Not Good			Not Acceptable		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	freq	%	Freq	%	
Alamala-Edu junction	3	30	5	50	1	10	1	10	10	100	
IdorawaGasline , Edu.	2	20	3	30	1	10	4	40	10	100	
Paapa, Edu.	2	20	1	10	1	10	6	60	10	100	
Ago-Titun, Edu.	1	10	1	10	4	40	4	40	10	100	
Olowoporoku, Edu.	1	10	1	10	3	30	3	30	10	100	

Table 11 above revealed the analysis of the attitude of parents to teenage pregnancy in Edu-Agbara community as follows: 50% are very satisfied with teenage pregnancy in Alamala– Edu junction, 40% perceived teenage pregnancy as an act that is not acceptable in Idorawa Gasline area. 60% perceived teenage pregnancy as not acceptable in Paapa area, 40% perceived teenage pregnancy as not good and not acceptable in Ago-Titun area whereas 30% perceived teenage pregnancy as an act which is not good and not acceptable in the society.

### Discussion

Findings from the study showed that Parents' Perception of Teenage Pregnancy Prevalence among Secondary School Students indicates that most parents perceived prevalence of teenage pregnancy to be very serious as the case is in residential areas like Alamala-Edu junction (50%), Paapa (50%) and Idorawa-gasline (40%). This is as a result of the proximity of such residential areas to places like day/night club house (Galilee club and Bluenet club), hotels, restaurants, guest rooms and game/sport viewing centres. The presence of such social centres around residential and educating areas where teenagers are watching and imitating diverse role models does not portray a good environment. Teenagers trained in such places are prone to learn vices from people patronizing the club houses which they often practice among themselves and with adults resulting into, thereby enhancing the spread of teenage pregnancy in Edu-Agbara community.

In addition, findings from the Teachers' Perception of Teenage Pregnancy prevalence among Secondary School Students, it is obvious that there is a very serious degree of spread of teenage pregnancy in schools like Edu-Agbara community high school (80%) being a public school where there is a large population of teenage female students' birth and trained by single and divorced parents. This makes the school a no-go area for parents who are rich enough to afford private secondary schools such as Stelinn International secondary school, Graceland school and Johntech school where there is less or no spread of teenage pregnancy.

Obviously, in Edu-Agbara community high school, students' perception of prevalence of teenage pregnancy is 70% very serious. This may be as a result of large population of teenage female students, exposure to various sexual activities practiced by their role models and little

teacher/parental care and counseling. Girls who are yet to be caught in the act or practice the act are either from a family where both parents are living together or are still in J.S.S 1 class where there is less population of teenagers. This implies that the upper classes in secondary schools are porous to causative factors of teenage pregnancy.

It is evident from the respondents' perception of the causative factors of teenage pregnancy as retrieved from the data analysis that most victims of teenage pregnancy in secondary schools located in Edu-Agbara community are lured by peer pressure- parents' perception (22%) and teachers' perception (24%). Every young teen wants to get along with trendy affairs such as having a boyfriend/girlfriend and to make this relationship secured and interesting, would do anything such as engaging in pre-marital sex which most times is done without protection. This mental outlook is the result of peer pressure on teenagers.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, this research concludes that stemming the tide of teenage pregnancy is a pervasive behavioural act among secondary students, particularly the Edu-Agbara community in Ogun State, Nigeria. This behavioural act has gained ground in this present-day societies and it has become a global phenomenon among the teenagers. Obviously, most parents' attitudes or better still, behavioural acts have also been of negative contributions toward this unpleasant act. In addition, the economic situations in various milieus have further compounded the acts by exposing most teenagers to early means of making money to fend for themselves.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings that evolved from the findings carried out in this study, the following are hereby recommended:

- a.) That home and school environment should be protective enough to shield teenagers from exposure to negative influences.
- b.) That parents and teachers should be concerned about the well-being of teenagers especially the girl child through education about sex and sexuality and the danger inherent.
- c.) That parent should not be too harsh on teenagers but they should be approachable so that their children can confide in them whenever there is a pressure from peers.
- d.) That when children approach teen age, they should be enlightened about the consequence of engaging in sex at the early stage of their lives whilst parents stand at best position always to meet the needs of the teenage child.
- e.) That education of the girl-child should be made free and compulsory at the basic education level because, free basic education for the girls will increase school enrolment of teenagers who hitherto were out of school as a result of exorbitant fees and pregnancy.
- f.) That social welfare agency (public and private) should redouble their efforts towards the education, counseling and rehabilitation of victims of teenage pregnancy in Edu-Agbara community and across Nigeria.
- g.) That teenage programs should be tailored to the needs of individual communities such as Edu-Agbara community of Ogun State and include health promotion information and advice, especially on risk taking behavior.

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