

MALE PERCEPTIONS OF ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN KISII, KENYA

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BACKGROUND

With the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comes a renewed and expanded focus on adolescent health and well-being. Adolescents face various challenges, including early pregnancy, and increased likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour. The objectives of this study were borne out of community input from previous studies looking into adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) carried out in Kisii, as in all these the community asked for more male involvement in issues related to ASRH, specifically adolescent pregnancy.

METHODS

An exploratory assessment using various qualitative methods was used. Key informant interviews (n=8) with male stakeholders in the community were held. Focus group discussions (n=118) with adolescent boys, male caregivers and *boda-boda* riders were carried out and a semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 10 primary school teachers. Two community forums (n=119) were also held. Qualitative data collected during the various discussions was electronically transcribed, manually coded, then analysed using an inductive process. Each recurrent theme was assigned a code, and then categorized as: 1) Root causes of adolescent pregnancies, 2) Solutions to reducing adolescent pregnancy, and 3) Understanding of ASRH concepts.

RESULTS

Participants identified four root causes of adolescent pregnancy: 1) lack of caregiver availability, 2) poor parenting, 3) poverty and food insecurity, and 4) immorality. The participants generated several solutions including optimizing household culture and increasing community support, as well as creating income generating activities to curb poverty. They also cited the need for continued education on ASRH in the community.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants in this assessment acknowledged poverty as a major determinant of adolescent health, and recognized that decreasing adolescent pregnancy rates will require multi-level interventions, with an approach integrating the socioecological model to provide a framework for proposed interventions.