Teen Parenting

Student’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

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**Introduction**

Teen pregnancy negatively affects various aspects of the economy. The United States records almost 75,000 teen pregnancies and 400,000 teenage births every year ("Adolescent pregnancy," 2020). These parents desire to offer the best livelihood to their children; however, most of them come from low-income families without strong support networks and a comprehensive array of resources necessary for effective parenting. Arguably, the parents are exposed to marital instability and experience diminished parental abilities due to poor social-economic environments. Therefore, there is a need to provide initiatives aimed at educating both the female and male parents about teen parenting and how to become self-sufficient adults.

The study seeks to explore various interventions that can offer both individual and group support to pregnant teens and mothers. Besides, it seeks to explore the nature, causes, and impacts of teen parenting. The study also offers a summary of significant areas in the field that have not been explored and their contributions to the study. Teen parents experience various challenges during pregnancies and after childbirth; therefore, there is a need to offer different interventions that can impact their behavioral, emotional, and cognitive wellbeing.

**Research Questions**

1. How do weekly parenting classes improve teen parenting?
2. Does peer support improve teen parenting?
3. How do stress management therapies improve teen parenting?

**Nature of the Problem**

Adolescence pregnancy is the primary health problem globally, which is associated with high child morbidity and maternal rates. The issue affects a country’s socio-economic development. Notably, geographical, economic, and ethnic disparities persist in teen birth rates, where, Hispanic and black Americans record more teen pregnancies than the whites and non-Hispanics. Besides, the pregnancies are higher among the older teens compared to the younger ones.

The rate of teen pregnancy has not been steady over the years. The pregnancy and motherhood have declined by 36% and 34%, respectively, since 1991 in the U.S. The trend was accelerated in 2007 after the onset of the Great Depression (Gretchen & Deja, 2020). Although the fall in the birth rate was associated with the economic downturn of the recession, the rate has continued to decrease despite economic recovery. Notably, the United States’ rate remains higher than in other industrialized nations, where 7.5% get pregnant, and almost 5% become mothers each year (Gretchen & Deja, 2020). For instance, in 2017, approximately 194,000 babies were born to women aged between 15-19 years. Overall, the United States is the most affected by teenage pregnancies in developed countries.

**Causes of Teen Pregnancies**

In the U.S., most of the teenagers are healthy and developing well; hence, there is optimism in many areas of adolescent’s health. However, many of them face preventable mental and behavioral health issues, violence, and substance use. They engage in sexual risk behaviors that can lead to early pregnancies.

Various biological and social factors increase the chances of teenage pregnancies. Firstly, exposure to hardships during childhood increases the odds of teen parenting. Unfortunately, children from families with low-economic status live from hand to mouth, and the parents lack the necessary resources to raise and nurture their infants (Kassa, Arowojolu, Odukogbe, & Yalew, 2018). The kids have low educational goals and ambitions due to a lack of parents’ involvement. Besides, they do not get employment opportunities like children from rich families, who attain a better education. Consequently, they start interacting with other children facing similar challenges, and with a lack of knowledge about reproduction, they engage in unprotected and unsafe sexual activities. Some use the contraceptives wrongly, which does not prevent the pregnancies. Overall, coming from low-income families increases the chances of teen parenting.

Secondly, females who come from a family with a history of teen pregnancies are more likely to give birth earlier compared to those without. Socialization and social control theories of inter-generational transmission of early childbirth argue that kids born by teenage mothers have higher chances of becoming teen parents too (Wall-Wieler, Roos, & Nickel, 2016). Arguably, family members contribute to a teenager’s attitudes toward life. Therefore, the youngsters whose mothers or sisters have had teenage births had an adolescent childbearing rate more than twice of those of the same age females. The children are exposed to the norms of early parenthood earlier than expected.

Thirdly, peer pressure and sexual abuse is another contributor to teen pregnancies. Teenagers are often forced into sexual activities by older male partners, who do not use protection. Unfortunately, many teenagers have been sexually abused by predators or family members before they enter puberty stage. Lastly, drug and alcohol abuse affects adolescents’ normal brain functioning, thereby adversely impacting their thinking capabilities (Kassa, Arowojolu, Odukogbe, & Yalew, 2018). The behaviors increase the odds of engaging in irresponsible sexual activities and getting pregnant. Broadly, sexual and alcohol abuse and peer pressure have increased teen parenting in the United States.

**Impacts of Teenage Parenting**

Teenage pregnancies are associated with negative impacts on both mothers and children. According to Kassa, Arowojolu, Odukogbe, & Yalew, pregnancy and childbirth complications are the primary cause of deaths among teenagers globally (2018). Most of them might not have information about kids’ upbringing, which might make them feel suicidal. Moreover, teenagers are more likely to develop mental and physical health problems, such as eclampsia, systematic infections, post-partum depression, and stress. The condition can force teenagers to refrain from breastfeeding their infants and start abusing drugs and using alcohol.

The infants are also more likely to develop physical, emotional, and cognitive complications due to lack of proper care. Moreover, they may be born pre-term and record increased neonatal mortality (Gretchen & Deja, 2020). Overall, the lack of competence in the parenting field can negatively affect the infants.

Teen pregnancies can also result in abusive parenting behaviors. The young parents may be subjected to isolation, rejection, and stigmatization from parents, partners, or peers (Gretchen & Deja, 2020). The rejection may force teenagers to practice bad parenting habits to the infants as a way of relieving stress. Children who experience bad upbringing might pass the norm down to their offspring.

**Interventions**

**Weekly Parenting Classes**

Most teenage parents lack enough knowledge about parenting. Therefore, the weekly parenting class should be facilitated by registered nurses, who teach the teenagers about emotional, cognitive, and social child development. Accordingly, the parents learn about the infants’ inner functioning, which is essential in helping them plan, focus, and take efficient actions.

Moreover, developmental knowledge can help teenagers understand various challenges associated with parenting and nurturing. According to psychosexual developmental theory, a child’s moral self begins to mature at the age of three, which determine the moral development in later childhood (Kendra, 2020). Behavioral childhood development theories assert that people’s behaviors are influenced by the environment (Kendra, 2020). Markedly, conflicts that occur at childhood have adverse impacts on the children and influence their personality and behaviors. Therefore, the teen parents should be taught how to start nurturing their children at this stage to avoid problems in the future. Overall, the weekly parenting class should target to educate teens about child development to ensure that they take care of their infants well.

The weekly class should also educate teen parents about strategies to improve effective communication with their infants. According to social cognitive theory, communication holds an essential position in a child’s knowledge acquisition (Zhu, Yang, MacLeod, Yu, & Wu, 2019). The approach insists that people’s chances of survival are based on their intelligence and are moulded by experiences. Therefore, the teen parents should be taught how to communicate with children and understand their inner thought. For instance, before teaching their kids how to speak, they should understand that babies communicate non-verbally and learn to speak before they can write or read. Broadly, educating the young parents about effective communication skills is essential since it helps them to interact with their infants well.

**Peer Support**

Linking behavioral support with peer aid helps to increase teenagers’ engagement and social connectedness. Arguably, the parenting program can be conducted using multi-family or multi-parent group style, where the adolescents are allowed to share their experiences. Accordingly, the initiative can act as a source of social support and peer learning. For instance, peer support via the internet can allow teenagers to open up about their daily struggles, and others can offer hope or strategies to mitigate the problems. Besides, those with mental illnesses can feel understood and safe, thereby motivating them to return for the session. Notably, the initiative can be facilitated by the registered nurses, whose primary roles should be to orient new members and ensure the achievement of the initiative’s objectives. Overall, the approach can help reduce stigma, minimize isolation, and improve the sense of connection.

**Stress Management Therapy**

The intervention should target to help teen parents reduce stress and promote compassionate behaviors. Notably, the teen parent therapists should facilitate the initiative’s implementation and ensure that each parent’s unique needs are addressed. The therapists offer emotional support, especially to teenagers who have faced stigmatization, rejection, or isolation. They should develop a customized plan for eliminating the stressors and addressing the root problem.

Stress management therapy is effective when implemented properly. According to systematic stress theory, stress primarily occurs as a reaction to a multitude of multiple events that have fatal consequences (Hilpert et al., 2018). Therefore, the therapists should address the issues that are likely to have contributed to the stress among teenagers. For instance, if parents’ reaction towards early pregnancies aggravates the problem, the therapists can offer family therapy and encourage the parents to support their children. Overall, the intervention can reduce stress and encourage the parents to have compassionate behaviors towards children.

**Summary**

Although teen parenting has reduced since the 1990s globally, the trend continues to escalate in the United States. The teenagers engage in unprotected sexual activities while young because of drug and alcohol use, poverty, peer pressure. Besides, coming from families with a history of teenage pregnancies is a risk factor. Notably, teenagers experience various challenges during pregnancy and after childbirth, which might adversely affect their overall health. Overall, there exist some gaps regarding how to handle teen parents to ensure their safety and that of their children is safeguarded.

Therefore, the study explores various interventions that can promote teen parents’ health to facilitate effective parenting. Notably, the teenagers might have mental complications, such as stress and depression. Hence, teen parent therapists should offer stress management therapies and find ways to overcome rejection, isolation, and stigmatization from parents, peers, and partners. Moreover, registered nurses should teach teenagers about child development and effective communication strategies to ensure that they take good care of their infants.

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