Factors & Risks Associated with Adolescents Late Entry into Prenatal Care

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Prenatal care is a type of preventative health care for pregnant women that is typically initiated in the first trimester. However, when prenatal care is inadequate, initiated past the first trimester or missed, the mother and fetus experience an increased risk for preterm delivery. Adolescents are a specific subgroup of pregnant women that are at a higher risk for adverse outcomes during pregnancy due to knowledge deficits. Therefore, adolescents are especially likely to receive inadequate prenatal care services. Numerous studies have been conducted to discover the result of inadequate prenatal care; however, not as many studies explore the factors associated with late entry or lack of entry into prenatal care for adolescents. These factors need to be identified so care providers can accurately identify pregnant adolescents who are at the greatest risk for receiving inadequate care so that they can attempt to prevent preterm births.

Study Design/Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 primigravida mothers less than 19 years old</td>
<td>Convenience sample of 260 ethnically diverse adolescents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 focus groups across 3 sites were held</td>
<td>Ages 13-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pen-ended questions were asked</td>
<td>Mean maternal age of 15.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 in 72 hours of birth</td>
<td>Interviewed patients at their first prenatal visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random sampling of women under 20 years with singleton pregnancies</td>
<td>Structured questionnaire followed by medical records analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collected from 1/1/2007-6/27,107 women</td>
<td>Study 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivariate logistic regression used to assess association between the 2 factors</td>
<td>5: 3 adolescents, mean age of 15.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Studies have identified that adolescents are at a higher risk of receiving late or absent prenatal care. The most recurrent complication of inadequate prenatal care is demonstrated to be preterm birth. Efforts by health care providers should be made to support methods for obtaining assistance needed to receive adequate prenatal care for this high risk population.

Findings

- Adolescents are judged for being pregnant → hinders them from seeking care
- If ≥16 years old, they are found to have an increased risk for limited prenatal care
- Gestational age & partner violence affected the onset of PNC visits
- Adolescents initiated prenatal care at an average of 15 weeks gestation
- Additional Characteristics related to late entry: multipara, absence of previous abortion, unemployment, no relationship with father, living with mother, unwanted pregnancy
- Significant increase in preterm births in adolescents who did not receive prenatal care in comparison to those who attend 75-100% of their prenatal visits

Major Themes:

1. Characteristics of negative health care encounters
2. Emergence of contemporary stereotypes during these encounters
3. Characteristics of positive health care encounters

Implications for Practice

- Adolescents may benefit most from PNC tailored to their specific age group (e.g. Centering Pregnancy)
- Obstetric care providers should not assume the adolescent is at high risk based on healthy lifestyle means early PNC entry
- Communicate the need for early PNC whenever adolescents come in contact with the health care system
- Schools should spread the awareness and resources about early prenatal care
- Specific training programs to improve judgement-free care in adolescents across all healthcare disciplines

Conclusion/Further Study

Conclusion:

Prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy is vital for adolescents to prevent the adverse risk factors. Studies revealed that most adolescents do not receive the recommended minimum 11 prenatal care visits before delivery. If these risk factors are integrated into practice, then care providers can adequately identify at risk adolescents to potentially decrease preterm births.

Further Study:

- Include adolescents that did not receive any prenatal care
- Further studies about the experiences and factors of adolescents