

## Extent of the Implementation of DOH Programs for Teenage Pregnancy

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Mrs. Maximina Blanco, Mrs. Maria Sheila Clanor & Dr. Bella Magnaye

College of Nursing, Lyceum of the Philippines University – Batangas

mablanco@lpubatangas.edu.ph; maclanor@lpubatangas.edu.ph; bpmagnaye@lpubatangas.edu.ph

**Abstract** – One of the common social problem which is not resolved in many countries is the teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy occurs within the ages from 13-19 becoming pregnant. This study aimed to determine the government and nongovernment initiatives towards prevention of teenage pregnancy in Batangas City. Specifically, it pursued to determine the prevalence of teenage pregnancy for year 2012-2016; assess the implementation of organizations initiatives and lastly propose programs to enhance the initiatives towards prevention of teenage pregnancy. A quantitative design was utilized, and descriptive statistics was used in the analysis of data. The result shows that moderately implemented programs and initiatives of the government and non-government organizations. The proposed program may enhance the implementation of government and nongovernment agencies. The empowerment of barangay health workers in prevention of teenage pregnancy with the involvement of parents and female adolescent thru seminars and counseling, the allocation of sufficient budget in the implementation of programs, and the monitoring of compliance to reproductive health programs undertaken by private and public schools was recommended.

**Keywords** – Teenage pregnancy, prevalence

### INTRODUCTION

Being in the teenage phase of life and finding out that one is expecting a baby, especially if the pregnancy is unintended and not wanted, can put enormous stress on an individual and to the family. However, there is support available to help them to make the wisest choice currently.

Teenage pregnancy, one of the common social problems that are not resolved in many countries including the Philippines. Teenage pregnancy occurs within the ages from 13-19 and it can affect the physical, emotional, social, psychological and spiritual balance of a teenager who become a parent at a very young age [1].

Teenage pregnancy results to take away the time and opportunity for a girl to savor the phase of being a teenager, without any other responsibilities but to take care of her body and her own future. Since a pregnant woman has the responsibility to take care of her child, schooling may be stopped and landing in a good job during pregnancy may be consequently difficult.

City Health Office record revealed 826 cases of teenage pregnancy in Batangas City on year 2015, wherein in every Barangay there are cases of teenage pregnancy and the lowest was at 10 years of age (Batangas News, 2015). On recent years, Commission

on Population stated that there is a strike of rise of cases of pregnancy among adolescents in the Philippines from 1,700 cases in the year 2014 to 1, 986 cases in 2015..

One out of ten adolescent women aged fifteen to nineteen has experience childbearing: which eight percent of it are already female parent and other two percent are expecting to give birth with their first child as per the outcome of the 2013 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). Compared to the part of the young adult women who have started children bearing happen to be higher among those who belongs to the poor households, as opposed to those who were classified as wealthy households, thirty seven percent for young women from the lowest wealth quintile versus thirteen percent for women from the highest wealth quintile [2].

In order to minimize the increasing cases of teenage pregnancy, programs are implemented by the Government and Non-Government Organizations. Some of these programs are widely implemented in Barangays, in schools and in the city. Programs such as the Health Teen Kiosk which are built within the school premises, Reproductive Health and Sex Education, Health Education in schools, Adolescent Health and Development, Adolescent Youth and Health

Development Programs (AYHDP), Information Education Campaign, Babaenihan Campaign, Forums and Counselling on Teenage Pregnancy and the Reproductive Health Law.

According to studies, the government have been putting an effort in promoting programs that might help in ending or at least decreasing the rate of early pregnancy cases among teenagers. But despite the efforts of the government and the behaviors of the teenagers, the programs seem to be ineffective as proven by continuous increase of teenage pregnancy cases here in the Philippines.

This is not only a concern by the government, but definitely feared by parents, this matter caught the attention of the researchers since the problem is at its peak now. The researchers strongly believed that in a small little way this study become an eye opener to at least remind teenagers the effect of pregnancy at a very young age.

#### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to find out the extent of the implementation of government programs towards prevention of teenage pregnancy in Batangas City. Specifically, it determines the prevalence of teenage pregnancy for year 2016 - 2019; assess the implementations of their initiatives by the government. Based on the findings, the proposed program was made to enhance the initiatives towards prevention of teenage pregnancy.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

##### **Research design**

The researchers utilized simple descriptive method of research. This tends to observe, describe and document aspects of situation as it naturally occurs. Simple descriptive design involves collection of data to describe characteristics of a population being studied, which also focus with describing the characteristics of the population in order to find out the connection of certain characteristics in the population, it does not answer questions about how/when/why the characteristics occurred [3].

This design best fit the present research as it sought to describe the variables being studied.

##### **Respondents of the Study**

The participants in this study were teenager's ages from 16-19 years old who experienced teenage

pregnancy and those who live in the identified top 10 Barangay with highest numbers of teenage pregnancy from year 2012-2016. The first requirement was that the participant is pregnant and experienced teenage pregnancy, the researchers obtain participants who are not just in the prevalence list but also those who are pregnant during the researchers conduct the study. Purposive sampling was used by the researchers to obtain target participants quickly.

##### **Data Instrument**

The researchers used a self-made questionnaire to gather facts and essential data. To come up with the questionnaires, the researchers do the records review. The questionnaire was adopted and modified from existing programs with regards to teenage pregnancy, was validated by experts in the field of research. The questionnaires consist of two parts. The first part is all about the government and programs consisting of 17 items to prevent teenage pregnancy.

The other part consists of assessment for the implementations done by the government and non-government organizations, the researchers guide the participants during the time they answer the questionnaires. An informed consent had been presented, explained, and signed by the respondents, assuring of their protections against exploitation. The researcher also guaranteed the respondents that all information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

##### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researchers reviewed literature to produce the topic proposal. After the approval of the topic, they continue gathering the needed information from books and other materials and develop the research proposal. They also asked the help of City Health Office to provide them the data on the cases of teenage pregnancy for them to identify which among the Barangay in Batangas City have highest number of teenage pregnancy cases.

##### **Data Analysis**

The study used descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics is used to describe and synthesize data. It used weighted mean to determine the degree of response on the variables being studied. On the other hand, ranking was also used to know the highest and lowest indicators in each indicator. SPPSS package was utilized to analyze the data.

### Ethical Consideration

Permission was obtained before conducting the face-to-face interview that was set at a convenient time of the teenage mothers. Prior to beginning of the questionnaire, the researchers obtained the informants' informed consent. The questionnaire was answered by the respondents with accuracy, honesty, and utmost objectivity. All responses were considered beneficial to the attainment and completion of the research study. In doing so, it was ensured that the questions asked in the questionnaire are relevant and only confined on the mentioned objectives and variables of the research topic and that there was no intrusion of the privacy or sensibilities of the respondents. The researchers assured that the data obtained will be treated with utmost respect and with strict confidentiality and other condition set by them was respected.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1**  
**Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy in Batangas**  
**City from Year 2016-2018**

BARANGAY	2016	2017	2018
BALETE	18	32	51
CUTA	60	46	46
STA. CLARA	44	59	41
BALAGTAS	35	32	40
STA.RITA	49	34	38
LIBJO	39	39	34
KUMINTANG	21	24	32
ILAYA			
KUMINTANG	25	24	32
IBABA			
TINGA LABAC	16	17	29
WAWA	49	37	25
ALANGILAN	34	35	25

Table 1 presents the distribution of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy from different Barangay's in Batangas City. The first three Barangay with the highest number of cases in less than 5 years are, Cuta with the sum of 152 cases, and it shows that in the year 2016 there is a notable increased of the number for early pregnancies and it was the highest recorded number of pregnancies among the stated Barangays, although it can be noted that in Cuta the two succeeding years had the same number of teenage pregnancies, still forty-six is considered high numbers. Second to the highest numbers of teenage pregnancy is Sta. Clara with a total of 144 cases in less than 5 years. In the year 2017 a sudden increased in the number of pregnancies

was evident, but in the year 2018 it decreased in numbers, but still considered high. The third among the highest number of teenage pregnancies is Barangay Balete with a total of 101 cases and is consistently increasing yearly, these records are very alarming considering that those mentioned Barangays are situated within the heart of Batangas City where health facilities, educations, and acquisition of learning's are accessible. On the contrary some study from National Conference of State Legislatures [4], shows that youth live in high poverty areas and with low access to education is at greater risk for teen pregnancies.

Further, Weiss [5], stated that although the birth rate for teenage pregnancy is falling for years, in the industrialized countries early pregnancy has go on as the highest rate. It was recorded that about eighty-five percent of those early or teen pregnancies are not planned. This posts an increased risk of problems in any population inflicted with teen pregnancies. As mentioned the biggest risk for teenage mothers is caused by not attending prenatal care on time. About seven percent of those teen mothers do not receive any care at all. The reasons why the number of teenage pregnancies here in our country, particularly in those 3 mentioned Barangay, keeps on soaring at a very alarming level are their poor socio-economic status that enables them to comply or apply what is needed to prevent teenage pregnancy and too, their willingness to participate with the mentioned programs although the BHW keeps on convincing and inviting the population of those teenage mothers. The majority of the population often neglects these initiatives. Such factors were supported by our data-gathering procedures conducted interviews, dissemination of our provided questionnaires, and interpretation of the results.

Table 2 shows the government initiatives to prevent teenage pregnancy. Among the programs initiates by the government to prevent teenage pregnancies all of them are moderately implemented with a composite mean of 2.96, this is relatively due the culture and beliefs of the Filipinos where reproductive health is not openly discussed in the family context.

This is supported by Rahman [6] it was stated that factors adding to the increasing number of teenage pregnancies is failing to practice safe sex using contraceptives, he also teenage pregnancy is religious affiliation, and the Catholic Church heavily influenced the Filipino family towards family planning.

**Table 2**  
**Government Initiatives to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy**

Programs	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Programs and Health Education among High School Students	3.41	Moderately Implemented	1
2. Programs on Reproductive Health and Sex Education	3.08	Moderately Implemented	3
3. Forum and counseling about teenage pregnancy	3.17	Moderately Implemented	2
4. Health Teen Kiosk to address issues and teenage concerns	2.71	Moderately Implemented	7
5. Provisions of Adolescent Youth and Health Development program (AYHDP)	2.74	Moderately Implemented	6
6. Intensify the IEC (Information Education Campaign) among the teachers, families, peers and adolescents	2.81	Moderately Implemented	4.5
7. Provision of Adolescent Health and Development (AHD) in school and local government units	2.81	Moderately Implemented	4.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>Moderately Implemented</b>	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Implemented; 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Implemented; 1.50 – 2.49 Less Implemented; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Implemented

It can be noted that all programs initiated by the government to prevent teenage pregnancy are all moderately implemented and the highest among is health education among high school students followed by forum and counseling and lastly reproductive health and sex education with a weighted mean of 3.41, 3.17 and 3.08 respectively.

Programs and health education among high-school students, ranked as the highest among the indicators. It ranked first because the high school students are prone to these phenomena, so government efforts are geared towards educating high school students and give an effort to prevent teenage pregnancy. Health education was included in the curriculum of the high school students, therefore more information was received by the students about teenage pregnancy, and aside from it the government as well as the non-government agencies initiates and do their part to educate the teenagers about teen pregnancy prevention. This is supported by the study of Mendez [7], wherein it was stated that health education among teens is very important in preventing teenage pregnancy.

According to Padilla [8], statistics showed that increasing numbers of pregnancy are alarming. Even though reproductive health law has already been passed, this country is still lacking on knowledge about sexuality inside the schools around the Philippines. Which moves to teach sex education as a separate subject is very important, but it is being contradicted by the Catholic Church.

Even the WHO also cites that the high rate of early pregnancy worldwide is due to lack of sex education. Furthermore, based on the study from the (WHO), teenagers feel uncomfortable to avail of buy contraception utilities, also teenagers may not afford contraceptives and not all birth control pills are available legally for the youth.

In addition, Natividad [9] stated that Filipinos in younger years have limited access to sex education and Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health (ASRH) services. Based on the article about 78 percent of teenagers don't use contraceptives or protection against different diseases and infection that can be acquired during sexual intercourse. With this, Southern Leyte and Eastern Samar started to implement the ASRH intervention where the rate of early pregnancy are multiplied. Programs that give peer education and counseling in ASRH and its rights were implemented specifically the Youth-Friend Spaces. This kind of measure helps to prevent the early pregnancy by giving the right information about the risk and results of early pregnancy on the young mothers of the infants.

Forum and counseling about teenage pregnancy is second among the indicators. These forums are undertaken in the Barangay level wherein health care workers provide counseling and seminars about teenage pregnancy to their respective constituents. It is because as mentioned, teenagers tend to ignore those programs that are specifically made for them by the government. They don't see it as an advantage or a precaution to prevent early pregnancy. In addition,

students are ashamed and embarrassed to express their concerns and emotions especially with regards to teenage pregnancy.

Seminars, forums and meetings were conducted to help prevent teenage pregnancies but cases of pregnancies among teenagers are increasing. Health indicators among high school students were also part of the program, however most of it implemented with moderation due to the culture of the Filipinos as well as family orientation where sex education is not part of the usual conversation within the family circle. Base on the observation and family practice, sexual activities are not openly discussed within the family.

This is supported by Padilla [8] that as stated by the WHO, the youth may be abashed to avail different contraception utility. Also, teenagers may not be legally allowed to avail contraceptives because of the fees and the law.

Third on the list is the program on reproductive health and sex education. It was found out that it was implemented but most of the time, the students don't participate in this kind of activities even if they were interested to the issue. They were ashamed to discuss it in front of other students. As a result, together with their curiosity they are just exploring it by themselves or with their partners to know the feelings of being in the act of sexual intercourse, without realizing its effect and possible result.

The effective strategy in improving the health of adolescents is the engaging to peer education. Which aims to develop the overall behavior of the teenagers with regards to the various healthcare issues that empowers them to compel with a healthier decision. Moreover, the importance of peer education in connection to promote the health of the youth is focused [10].

The lowest among the programs is the Teen Health Kiosk with a weighted mean of 2.71 followed by Adolescent Youth and Health Development Programs 2.74 and Adolescent Health and Development and Information Education Campaign with both weighted mean of 2.81 respectively.

Adolescent and Health Development Programs is one of the programs in Batangas City, which focuses on educating youth on how to prevent teenage pregnancy. Together with the non-government agency, USAID assisted the city in designing a service that will link and give access not just to schools but also to rural areas and to tertiary-level hospital.

Even the said program is implemented in Batangas City, it is not recognized, or the adolescent youth don't have knowledge about this. As stated above, probably

the reason is they did not focus on the schools where adolescent can be mostly found but they more concentrated on supporting tertiary level hospitals.

Base on the observations, tertiary hospitals have improved facilities and equipment while programs created by them were not disseminated and didn't reach other Barangay where teens can be mostly found. Another program like intensifying the IEC among families and provision of adolescent health and development in school and local government units both third on the least indicators.

As per De Allegri and Sauerborn [11], Information Education and communication campaign (IEC) is widely utilized to upgrade immunization and reduced the natality. It is also known as a practicable and lucrative approach to direct wider factors specifically health, risks, building and commitment, rearing community engagement and advancement regarding to the development and application of health capability.

It has been widely used to improve immunization coverage, promote sexual and reproductive health, family planning and reduced fertility levels. It is also known as a practicable and lucrative approach to addressing broader determinants of health, risk factors, building trust and commitment, fostering community participation and empowerment towards development and implementation of health initiatives.

Roles of IEC in the achievement of health, nutrition and population or the (HNP) goals and for the appropriate and better health outcomes that recommends the inclusion in health programs that was recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank. Provisions of Adolescent Youth and Development program are the second lowest among the indicators. The program AYHDP does not give emphasis on preventing teenage pregnancy because it gives more focus on promoting and enhancing the pro social bonding, cognitive and developing self-determination of the youth. It more focuses on the development of health among adolescent youth.

In support to this, based on the research of Morris and Rushwan [12], promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health will improve their health physically. But programs like this should be monitored and well-sustained due to high risk to be neglected by other countries. Their goal is to promote and enhance the prosocial bonding, cognitive, social and emotionally competence, their belief and develop independence. In addition, this service can make a big effect to build up the school context and have an encouraging environment. Various programs that may help develop their overall well-being and socializing

skills specially with relatives, although there is no statistically significant differences between programs. However, more research is still needed to view this program as a success.

The Teen Health kiosk to address issues and teenage concern is the least among the rest. Since THK is known to only two different schools in Batangas, the item got the lowest weighted mean because it is not recognized by most of the students in rural and urban areas of Batangas City.

This is supported by the article Teen Health Kiosk (THK) [13] is one of the City Health Office projects. On March 30, 2016 they put up this room with the help and support of Department of Education and the two-partner school, the Batangas National High School (BNHS) and the Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas, High school Department. According to 2013 “Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study”, there are 41 percent of teenagers in CALABARZON do not have knowledge about sexuality and most of them got wrong information from their classmates and friends.

Thru observations on the schools with built THK, students were not that interested in these Teen Hub. They were just reading the posters about it but don’t pay attention on its benefits and how can it help them. Therefore, the utilization of THK to the students of the school with built in hub is not encouraged.

Mass media and Information Communication Technology (ICT) use, Nonsexual Risk Behaviour, and Early Sexual Initiation of the Youth in Central Luzon Pop-com III’s approach to promote the effect of traditional and social media on the sexual behavior of youth, according to Pop-com III regional director Cura. With these films, it aims to address rising cases of teenage pregnancy, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and other sexually transmitted diseases and infections, as well as other youth-related concerns in the region [14].

Another program is Conduct of U4U Teen Trail initiative – interactive approach that showcases different activities for the youth as the national health promotion template. It is a government program with different set of activities that can help them to decrease the continuous increase of rate of early pregnancy. But since most of the teenagers are not oriented and aware of the program, they do not pay much attention about it.

Therefore, there should be an awareness campaign about the program so that it will become known to the teenagers. Intensifying the program through seminars, symposium and in school programs or activities can help both government and non-government agencies to promote the Teen trail program. Teenagers are missing this opportunity that might save them from engaging to sexual act because they are not fully aware of the program.

The least among the indicators is the orientation regarding online access to Teen Health Kiosk (THK). As per the online access to THK, not everyone has the internet access especially teenagers who are categorized as out of school youth, also teenagers who belong to low-income family. All of these factors are blocking their ability to access more advance methods of initiatives. Some of them don’t even have any idea that these programs existl.

Further, as claimed to Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality/YAFS [15] there are 41percent of teenagers in CALABARZON do not have knowledge about sexuality. THK is a learning hub where adolescents or whoever that is 10-19 years of age are welcome in here. It also added that this could be a peer hub where they can discuss, share opinions and ideas about adolescent health, sexuality, healthy lifestyle and other life skills but due to certain factors, few teenagers might not be able to access such initiative because of factors that affects a teenager’s living status.

**Program to Enhance Implementation and Initiatives towards Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOME</b>
Information Dissemination Development of IEC Material (Teen leaflets)	Distribution of Teen leaflets to different high schools in Batangas City	The target members of school distributed with flyers is met

Use of social media	Create a social media account page specific for awareness on prevention of teen age pregnancy	Increase numbers of followers in social media account
Coordinate with Barangay Health Center	Provide a copy of the leaflets study to the Barangay Health Worker	Enhanced Barangay Health Center Program towards prevention of Teenage Pregnancy

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Teenage pregnancy in the areas of Batangas City is prevented in areas where programs are implemented. Despite the availability of programs implemented by the government to address the problem about teenage pregnancy, in 2016 – 2019 the rate of early pregnancy is still increasing in numbers in some areas. The proposed program may enhance the program implementation of government and nongovernment agencies to increase the awareness about prevention of teenage pregnancy.

Based on the established conclusion the researchers recommend that the programs should be modified and are prepared through intense process for more effective initiation and easy access to teenagers. The proposed program can be utilized to promote the awareness in the prevention of teenage pregnancy. Empowerment of barangay health workers and other health care facilities in program implementation through trainings and seminars. Allocation of sufficient budget for the application of programs that is connected to teenage and adolescent health and wellness. The barangay health workers may involve the parents and female adolescents thru seminars and counseling. Monitoring of compliance to reproductive health programs undertaken by private and public schools.

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