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Letter to the editor

Teenage pregnancy: the need to renew research perspectives from Cuban medical journals

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Dear Director:

Although teenage pregnancy may seem like a well-worn topic that has already been extensively written about, the lack of significant reductions in adolescent fertility rates fully justifies keeping this issue at the center of academic debate and on the agenda of decision-makers.

According to leithersinformationAccording to the most recent World Health Organization reports, difficulties associated with pregnancy and childbirth remain a leading cause of death among women aged 15 to 19. The adolescent fertility rate in



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Latin America and the Caribbean remains the second highest in the world, surpassed only by Sub-Saharan Africa. (1)

From a biomedical perspective, early pregnancy is an obstetric risk factor in itself. Adolescents, particularly those under 16 years of age, have a higher incidence of preterm births, intrauterine growth restriction, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (preeclampsia-eclampsia), and gestational anemia. The pathophysiology of these conditions is partly explained by nutritional competition between the mother, who is in a phase of somatic development, and the fetus, which increases morbidity in both individuals. (2-4)

The Cuban medical journal Multimed has maintained an editorial line sensitive to these issues; however, in the last five years, only one article addressing the phenomenon has been published. The work of Gutiérrez Santisteban et al. from 2024 confirms that, in specific populations of Granma, Cuba, the average age of pregnant women is around 15.84 years, with a higher incidence at age 18. (5) By age 14, 70.5% of women have already had their first sexual experience, and a worrying 61.4% of the sample reported having had a previous pregnancy, suggesting patterns of repetition and difficulties in accessing or consistently using contraceptive methods; in fact, 65.9% of those surveyed did not use any method. (5)

The persistence of the aforementioned figures demands renewed research efforts and a deeper exploration of previously unexplored aspects, since the normalization of teenage pregnancy in academic discourse could have an unfavorable effect: that of assuming it as an unalterable phenomenon about which everything has already been said.

That is why it is imperative to continue publishing studies in Multimed that address adolescent pregnancy from new perspectives: qualitative research that explores the perceptions and experiences of the adolescents themselves; longitudinal studies that evaluate the impact on the physical and mental health of both mothers and their children; analysis of educational interventions and their effectiveness in the community; research on the role of the family in prevention; and, in particular, the creation of predictive models that identify the diversity of risk factors for sexual and



reproductive behavior in adolescence in the current Cuban context of Primary Health Care.

In his forthcoming doctoral thesis, researcher Guillermo Salgado Selema proposes a predictive model that integrates biological, psychological, and social variables to estimate the risk of unprotected sexual behavior in adolescents. This model, designed for application at the primary care level, could be a valuable tool for risk stratification and the design of personalized preventive interventions.

The authors of this letter call upon researchers in the region to diversify their studies on the issue, since, far from being a closed topic, the persistence of the phenomenon demands greater visibility in Multimed as a reminder that, as long as there is a single adolescent facing an unplanned pregnancy without the necessary support, research and action cannot stop.

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Conflicts of interest:

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contributions:

Guillermo Salgado Selema: conceptualization, research, validation, writing - original draft, writing - revision and editing.

Ismara Zamora León: conceptualization, research, writing – revision and editing.



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