82 - ADOLESCENCE: REASONS TO INDUCE ABORTION.

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Introduction

Adolescence causes youth to face conflicts which stir feelings that impact their daily life. As school is the place where adolescents should be, it is there where we can better observe the changes suffered by adolescents (Moura, 2000).

The family is the core from which the teenager wants to depart with the intention to grow and immerse herself in the adult world and it is the institution of school, in the historical and cultural context of society, which is one of the organizations that provides an interface between adolescents and the world outside the family.

Recently pregnancy in adolescence has been questioned as the cause of withdrawal of youth from this educational environment. Teachers begin to observe school absences during discrete periods which are justified as “illnesses"; the real reason only being told to those teachers who are closer, often those who maintain a partnership and friendship with the student (ALTMANN, 2001).

The topic of sexuality is present in the school environment surrounding conversations between boys and girls and it is a subject that should be approached in the classroom by the different school specialists. Themes of textbooks, as well as, songs, dances and games that animate recess and parties recently were formed, according to the *National Curricular Parameters* on *cross-cutting* theme.

One of the objectives of the *National Curricular Parameters*, considering sexual orientation at school, is the encouragement of self care, preparing individuals to incorporate the mentality and the preventive practices related to their sexuality. Physical Education appears as a privileged forum for this, either because of its content and dynamics classes, or the relationship that is established between teachers and students in those classes (IDEM, 2001)

The exercise of sexuality in adolescence, without proper maturity and responsibility, shows its results in the area of health whether it be the incidences of sexually transmitted diseases, or the frequency of unplanned pregnancies (PERES & HEILBORN, 2006; WHO 2001).

Teenagers become pregnant for several reasons including misinformation about the changes of their bodies, they don't associate the sexual relationship with fertility, and they don't take any measures to prevent pregnancy; only facing the problem when they are already pregnant seeing abortion as a method of contraception (SOUZA, 2001)

The magical thought that nothing will happen to me and inconsistent and loose relationships of this period, as well as making out leads to fortuitous dates that may end up in pregnancy. (NASCIMENTO, 2002)

The quality of the relationship between the teenager and her partner is fundamental to the option of keeping the pregnancy or not. At the moment the partner refuses take on parenthood or there is uncertainty of her feelings toward her partner even when he is willing to take on parenthood or union, the teenager decides for abortion. Usually the partner is also a teenager or young adult, without the emotional and financial structure to start a family (SOUZA, 2001).

Pregnancy in adolescence brings to surface the debate on induced abortio during this period. The number of spontaneous abortions is not different from one population to another yet the fees of abortions are different between countries and social groups, or ethnicities (WHO, 2001).

Legal or not, abortion causes debate dealing with moral and ethical issues. The idea that a woman can voluntarily choose to end a pregnancy, causes hostility by the idea of her reproductive function responsible for the maintenance of her species with responsibilities defined by society (BADINTER, 1985; GUTMATTER INSTITUTE, 2007).

Humanization actions in the assistance of induced abortion begin to be drawn in Brazil as a public policy however the assistance for the adolescent in sexual and reproductive health is still inadequate without specific actions aimed at this population (ROCHA, 2003; VILELA, 2006; BRAZIL 2007).

Adolescent women tend to induce abortion when they are too far along in pregnancy and in shady circumstances, which makes the act more dangerous and with greater risks to their health (WHO, 2007).

The present study is justified by the magnitude of the severity and the lack of studies about induced abortion in adolescence, *facing* illegality of the act in the country. Experience in practices of collective health in schools, the dialogue between teachers with confidences of girls about temporary withdrawals from school, as well as the questioning of a Physical Education teacher about the absence of one of the students on the indoor soccer team, awoke the interest for the present study. This article relates part of a larger study.

Objective.

Identify the reasons which bring adolescent students to practice abortion.

Method.

Cross cut observational study which has as its locus of school research five public schools and five private schools which comply with the criteria of having Junior High and High Schools levels of education, in Maceio, Alagoas, Brazil.

In order to calculate the random sample, the number of hospitalizations from post-abortion dilation & curettage was considered which data was obtained from the *Sistema de Informação de Internação Hospitalar (DATASUS).* Rossier (2003) and Guttmacher Institute (2007) recommended information was followed to obtain representative samples.

2,592 young women from 12 to 19 years old were interviewed. The age of 12 was selected taking into consideration their maturity / interest on answering the questionnaire, authorized by their guardians. Epidemiologically, 15 was considered the average age for the beginning of sexual life of women in the country (BRASIL, 2005)

The instrument used was a semi-structured questionnaire with open and closed questions that was given by five pairs of medicine and psychology students who were trained and evaluated for this purpose. A pilot study was realized to test the suitability of the instrument.

The data was collected in the classroom during a time set aside for this reason for students who desired to participate in the study only after receiving a clear and free consent form signed by them and their parents/guardians.

The databank was analyzed by the program Epi Info version 3.3.2. In order to identify the reason for the abortion the questionnaire was writen with an open question which asked: What led you to have an abortion? The responses were categorized thematically following content analysis of Bardin (1977).

The research complied with all ethical principles required having been approved after analysis from the *Committee on Ethics of the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL)*. The participation of the adolescents, as well as the authorization of the person responsible for them in cases of minors, was obtained through the TCLE, who were informed about the objective of the research. They were assured of the reliability of the information and the anonymity on the occasion of future publication of the results.

Results.

The sample was of 2,592 young females, in a normal distribution, with average and mean age of 15 and mode of 17 years. Of those, 47.8% were in Junior High and 52.4% in High School. The majority were single (95.7%), did not work (94.1%), lived with both the parents (66.2%) and knew some contraceptive method (94.8%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Characterization of the teenagers's research. Maceió, Brasil. 2005

Characteristics	*Age*				Total	
	12-14		15 - 19		N=2592	
	N=775	29.9%	N=1817	70.1%	N	%
Level of Education						
Junior School	751	60.6	488	39.4	1239	47.8
High Scholl	24	1.8	1329	98.2	1353	52.2
Work						
No	761	31.2	1679	68.8	2440	94.1
Yes	14	9.2	138	90.8	152	5.9
Residence						
With parents	550	32.0	1168	70.0	1718	66.3
Mother	166	28.4	418	71.6	584	22.5
Father	9	27.3	24	72.7	33	1.3
Other Relatives	48	27.3	128	72.7	176	6.8
Partners	2	3.0	65	97.0	67	2.6
Marital Status						
Single	762	30,7	1719	69,3	2481	95,7
Married	13	11,7	98	88,3	111	4,3
Know contraceptive methods						
Yes	720	29,0	1755	71,0	2475	95,5
No	55	47,0	62	53,0	117	4,5
Pregnancy						
Yes	11	6,7	154	93,3	165	6,4
No	763	31,4	1659	68,6	2427	93,6
Abortion						
Yes	11	7,4	138	92,6	149	26,7
No	43	10,5	367	89,5	410	73,3

The 559 girls who had an active sex life, 165 (29.5%) had been pregnant before and 63 (11.3%) of those didn't used any contraceptive method despite not wanting to become pregnant (Table 2) which exposed them to an unplanned pregnancy.

Table 2 - Distribution of teenagers who have an active sex life as for the use of contraceptive methods and pregnancy. Maceió. Brasil.2005

Distribution	**Age**				Total	
	12-14		15-19		N= 559	
	N=54	9.7%	N=505	90.3%	N	%
Use of contraceptive methods						
Yes	31	8.9	316	91.1	347	62.1
No	23	10.8	189	89.2	212	37.9
Pregnancy						
Got pregnant/ use some contraceptive method	6	5.9	96	94.1	102	18.2
Got pregnant/ don't use any contraceptive method	5	7.9	58	92.1	63	11.3
Didn't get pregnant	43	10.8	351	89.2	394	70.5

Among the students, 149 young females confirmed they have already had an abortion (Table 1) who gave 213 reasons to have an abortion, which shows the overlap of reasons (Table 3).

Fear was the main reason indicated 93 times (43.7%) ranging from the fear of parents or companion, to the fear of the society where the youth are incorporated.

In this category there are quotes such as:

"I am afraid of what my parents will say or do to me" (Janaina 14 years old).

"My father is very strict, he is military, he doesn't even know that I already have sex." (Paula 17 years old)

"I am afraid of being expelled from my house, abandoned by my parents" (Mary, 15 years old)

"People are very cruel, what will they say about me knowing that I am pregnant and I'm not married" (Beatriz, 16 years old)

Such statements show the importance of family ties in the young girls' life, even when they face the desire for independence experienced during adolescence. A fact that is verified by the first reason given for the induced abortion is that the mother had not supported the pregnancy (2.3%) (Table 3).

Tables 3 - Reason given for the induced abortion presented by the young girls.

Razão de abortar	N	%
Fear (of their parents, of society)	93	43,7
The girl didn't want to get pregnant	71	33,3
The partner didn't want it	43	20,2
The mother didn't support it	5	2,3
Rape	1	0,5
Total	213	100

The family is a reality which is constituted by the internal discussion of its members and reflects how it is constructed in the time and in the space in which it lives. The bonds experienced during childhood remain during adolescence being modified step by step at the time in which the teenager enters the adult world (SARTI, 2004, VILELA, 2006).

Due to the great amount of time spent at school, the teachers can also maintain a strong relationship with the young girls and, particularly the Physical Education teacher, is an important reference for his/her students because Physical Education provides a peculiar learning experience by mobilizing the effective, social, ethical and sexual aspects in an intense and explicit form which causes the Physical Education teacher to have a comprehensive knowledge of his/her students (ALTMANN, 2001).

Observing Table 2, it appears that 212 (37.9%) of the 559 young female who had an active sex life didn't use any contraceptive method which corroborates the second most cited reason (Table 3), which was the fact of not wanting to become pregnant, (33.3%), confirming the literature about adolescence, which shows the unresponsible exercise of sexuality during this period, coupled with the magical thought of "nothing will happen to me". And also the characteristic of exposure to risks, common in the age group studied (CORREIA, 2000; WHO 2001; PERES & HEILBORN, 2006).

The partner is of fundamental importance in the choice of going through or not with pregnancy during adolescence. When he refuses to take on fatherhood or there are uncertain feelings of the young female toward him, the girl prefers to decide to have an abortion rather than to experience pregnancy alone (SOUZA, 2001). Fact that is shown by the third reason with a frequency of 43 (20.2%) of the quotations pointing that the boyfriend didn't want the pregnancy (Table 3).

Conclusion

This study shows that the relationship and dialogue with parents can act as a preventive measure in the exposure of the risks of an induced abortion. It is necessary to support and inform the family of its role in the reasons given by the young females for the abortion.

Facing the certain exercise of sexuality by youth without adequate assessment of its consequences and without prevention even when the pregnancy is unwanted, shows the importance of sexual orientation at schools, crossing disciplinary boundaries can give teenagers one more channel for dialogue and knowledge in an area of great diversity, such as sexuality, which may allow this young person the awareness and the action to take care of herself/himself, changing risk behaviors.

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ADOLESCENCE: REASONS TO INDUCE ABORTION

ABSTRACT:

Sex education at school points to the importance of the teacher's role in the prevention of arising problems from the exercise of sexuality in adolescence. The magnitude of the problems from pregnancy and abortion on these ages justifies the current study that has as its objective to identify the reasons that cause adolescent students to have an abortion. The aforementioned study, which used the analysis theory of thematic content for categories of the answers, showed as the main reasons for abortion the fear of their parents, the unwanted pregnancy, and the rejection of their partner. Data which corroborates the literature studied about this subject as well as the family's role and the importance of dialogue and sex education at school.

KEYWORDS: adolescents, abortion, sex education.

LES RAISONS QUI ONT AMENÉ LES ÉTUDIANTS ADOLESCENTS À PROVOQUER L' AVORTEMENT.

RESUMÉ:

L'éducation sexuelle à l'école montre l'importance du rôle du professeur dans la prevention des problèmes comme un resultat de l'exercise de la sexualité dans l'adolescence. La magnitude du problème de la grossesse et de l'avortement à cet age là justifie cet étude, où l'objectif c'est d'identifier les raisons qui ont amené les étudiants adolescents à provoquer l'avortement. L'étude descriptif a utilisé la théorie de l'analyse thématique pour les responses, et il a montré comme des raisons principales de l'avortement la peur des parents, la grossesse non désirable et la refuse du conjoint à accepter le fait. Les données obtenues de la literature sont en accord avec l'étude, aisin que le rôle de la famille et l'importance du dialogue et l'éducation sexuelle à l'école.

MOTS CLES: adolescents, avortement, éducation sexuelle.

ADOLESCENTES: RAZONES DEL ABORTO PROVOCADO.

RESUMEN:

La educación sexual en la escuela señala a respecto de la importancia del papel del profesor, en la prevención de los problemas decurrente del ejercicio de la sexualidad en la adolescencia. La magnitud del problema del embarazo y de aborto en esta edad justifica el actual estudio, con objetivo de identificar las razones que habían llevado adolescentes estudiantes a provocar el aborto. Estudio descriptivo, que utilizó uno cuestionario como instrumento, y la teoría del Análisis de Contenido, temático, para la clasificación de las respuestas. Encuéntranos como razones principales del aborto el miedo de los padres, de no desear al embarazo y no a la aceptación del concepto para el socio. Los datos, corroboran la literatura estudiada sobre el tema, así como el papel de la familia y la importancia del diálogo, y de la educación sexual en la escuela.

PALABRAS LLAVES: adolescentes, aborto, educación sexual.

ADOLESCENTES: RAZÕES DE ABORTAMENTO PROVOCADO.

RESUMO:

A educação sexual na escola aponta para a importância do papel do professor, na prevenção dos problemas decorrentes do exercício da sexualidade na adolescência. A magnitude do problema da gravidez e abortamento nessa idade justifica o presente estudo que teve como objetivo identificar as razões que levaram adolescentes estudantes a provocarem o abortamento. Estudo descritivo, que usou um questionário como instrumento, e a teoria da Análise de Conteúdo temática para categorizações das respostas. Mostrou como razões principais para o abortamento o medo dos pais, o não desejar a gravidez e a não aceitação do concepto pelo parceiro. Dados que corroboram a literatura estudada sobre o tema, como também o papel da família e a importância do diálogo e educação sexual na escola.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: adolescentes, abortamento, educação sexual.