



UNRAVELLING THE ISSUES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN MALAYSIA: A SCOPING REVIEW (NMRR-18-840-40524)



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INTRODUCTION

- Teenage pregnancy is a global issue that affects countries with high, middle, and poor incomes.
- Teenage pregnancies are more common in marginalised populations around the world, attributed to poverty, a lack of education, and a lack of economic opportunities.
- To the best of the authors' knowledge, there is limited comprehensive review regarding teenage pregnancy conducted in Malaysia.

AIM

- This review aimed to identify the outcomes and associated factors regarding teenage pregnancy in Malaysia.

METHODS

- The scoping review was based on the framework by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), Levac et al. (2010) and Colquhoun et al. (2014).
- The review processes of at least five stages: identifying the research questions which guided by the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Framework (WHO, 2007); identifying relevant studies pertaining to teenage pregnancy in Malaysia between 2004 and 2018 using database such as Google Scholar, MEDLINE and PubMed.
- The study selection based on Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).

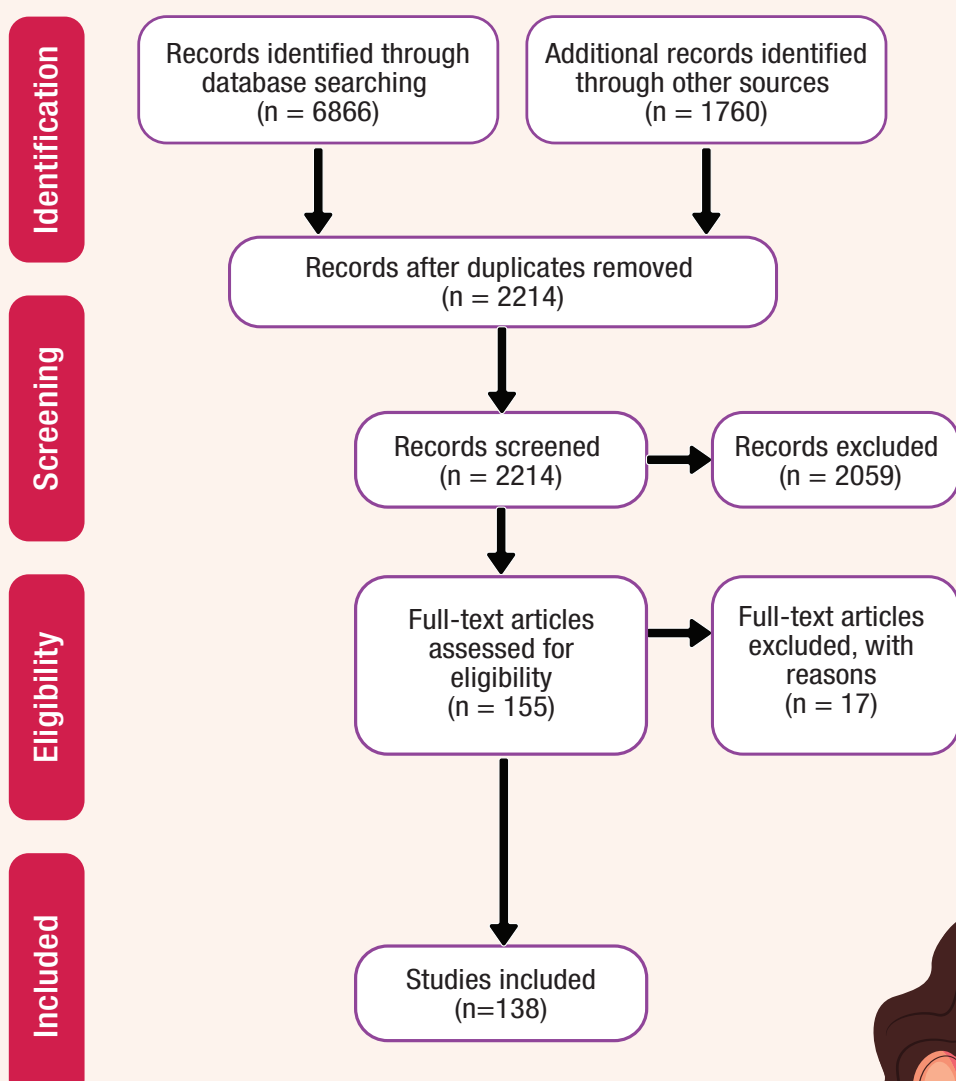


Figure 1: Flow chart of the selection process

RESULT

- The search yielded 8,626 articles, of which 6,866 were from database search and 1,760 were identified from the grey literature.
- A total of 2,214 records that remained after 6,412 records were found to be duplicates and were removed. Finally, a total of 138 articles met the inclusion criteria.
- Review indicates that eclampsia, premature birth onset, fetal mortality, and premature delivery all were adverse outcomes of teenage pregnancy.
- Among the prominent factors associated with teenage pregnancy were the role of individual morality and religiosity; parenting; psychological factors and how sexual decision-making influenced teenager's perception towards premarital sex.

CONCLUSION

- The evidence from the review indicates that adolescents engage in sexual behaviour and experience a variety of negative consequences and outcomes, including increasing trends and patterns of adolescents' risky sexual behaviour in Malaysia.
- This review demonstrates that adolescents engage in sexual behaviours as a result of a variety of factors or determinants. While some studies have shown promising results in terms of promoting sexual health education, increased awareness, and positive attitudes, and behaviours, there is a need to re-evaluate, enhance, and strengthen various SRH intervention strategies that are evidence-based, culturally appropriate, and adolescent-friendly.

DISCUSSION

A Strengthening the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education in early phase of adolescents

- The majority of the studies examined found a concerning prevalence of early sexual activity. Our review also revealed that adolescents engage in petting behaviour and have access to pornographic materials.
- Curiosity, the media, friends, peer pressure, substance use, poor mental health, parenting styles, family communication, and religious values were also mentioned in this review. As a result, policymakers, the community, NGOs, religious groups, schools, parents, and teenagers themselves must consider these issues and start to take an active part in promotive and preventive strategies.

B Targeted programs for specific group

- This review also found that adolescents who engaged in premarital sex had unsafe sex with multiple sexual partners, limited use of contraception, and a lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS and STIs.
- These adolescent populations require specific attention. We discovered that the majority of the country's existing promotive and preventive SRH initiatives are more focused on the general adolescent population.
- To better understand this group of adolescents, as well as how these problems may be addressed to enhance morbidity outcomes and lower mortality risk, should be prioritised. Promotional, preventive, and rehabilitative care all provide such opportunities. Addressing the unmet needs of these specific groups of adolescents will thus require a holistic strategy, inter-agency collaboration, and coordination among various stakeholders.

C The needs to explore out-of-school adolescents

- There is a need to investigate sexual and reproductive health issues among out-of-school adolescents.
- The term 'out-of-school adolescents' does not refer to adolescents who are not enrolled in an age-appropriate level of education (i.e. lower secondary or upper secondary), but to those who are definitively out of school, meaning they are not enrolled in lower secondary or any other level of education – most commonly primary (UNESCO, 2010).
- Due to the fact that these groups of adolescents are understudied in terms of SRH in Malaysia, this review reveals that the majority of published studies focused on secondary school/college/university students, adolescents enrolled in youth development programmes, and adolescents in rehabilitation institutions. As a result, SRH-related issues for out-of-school adolescents remain unreachable at the present. To monitor out-of-school adolescents, it is necessary to obtain reliable and comprehensive data on their age groups in order to plan and implement SRH-related interventions that are targeted to their specific needs.

D Culturally appropriate intervention strategies

- The review concluded that future studies are needed to assess and explore various issues and determinant factors associated with SRH among Malaysian multiethnic adolescents.
- Because SRH intervention programmes have developed and have progressively moved beyond merely information provision. Certain programmes now emphasise the development of life skills, such as decision-making and confidence, in order to equip adolescents to resist peer pressure and to understand their right to sexual health information and services. Thus, imparting these values should be consistent with and customised to the culture, beliefs, and religious needs of Malaysian adolescents.

E Research needs on sexual and reproductive health among adolescents in Sabah and Sarawak

- This review demonstrates that the majority of studies on SRH among adolescents in Sabah and Sarawak were conducted through national surveys conducted by the Institute for Public Health (IPH), the Institute for Health Behavioral Research (IHBR), and the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB).
- These national surveys are mainly concerned with prevalence. However, there is a lack of data on SRH-related knowledge, attitude, perception, and practise. This review identified a few unpublished studies conducted on adolescents in two states' rehabilitation centres.
- Additionally, a few unpublished research on adolescents' SRH were undertaken by post-graduate students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Given the high rate of unmarried teenage pregnancy and early sexual debuts in Sabah and Sarawak, it is proposed that more published studies examine specific issues affecting various communities in the two states.

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