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Talking To Your Teens About Pregnancy

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TALKING TO YOUR TEENS ABOUT PREGNANCY

SERGIO MUNOZ, ROTATION 3, 2017
LOCATION: Danbury, CT
MENTORS: Nya Rossi PA, Erica Maillet
THE ISSUE

- Teen mothers are at risk for poorer prenatal care, leading to complications both during pregnancy and delivery. The rate of low birthweight and premature delivery is higher among teen mothers than the average population.

- Teen pregnancy and birth are major contributors to lower educational achievement and income. They are less likely to graduate high school and college, leading to increased rates of poverty among teen mothers.
Teen mothers are also at increased risk of inadequate weight gain, and alcohol/drug abuse, all of which contribute to the higher rate of infant mortality observed among them.

Finally, infants born to teen mothers are at increased risk of being a teen parent themselves, leading to vicious cycle.
According to the CT department of public health, birth to teen mothers in Danbury equaled 9.1-30.6 per 1000 15-19yo females. The second highest category in the state.
Due to the increased rate of adverse outcomes in children of teen mothers, public sector costs increase.

The increased costs are due to increased dependence in public healthcare, welfare, higher incarceration rates and welfare.

In 2008, the public sector costs of teen pregnancy in CT alone totaled 173 million dollars.
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

- Thoughts from Erica Maillet: Teen pregnancy is definitely an issue, most teens are not ready to care for an infant. “the biggest issues I can think of are the money difficulties, family problems, and lack of education that can come from having a child so early”. “I think its important to discuss issues like birth control, STD education and even birth classes”

- Having a list of available resources for education/current teen parents would definitely be something useful for both them and even providers
COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

- Thoughts from Nya Rossi PA: I don’t have much experience with teen pregnancy directly, but I do know that it is important to discuss things like contraception, social supports, parenting, and even mood disorders.

- Preferred method of contraception is IUD or implants, but every method is covered by insurance.

- Having a list of available resources for teens would be useful, I am not aware of any of the sources available.
Based on the interviews with members of the community and with the providers in the clinic, it was determined that preventing teen pregnancy in the first place would be a good project, as there are many costs and adverse events associated with it.

A topic that arose with everyone interviewed centered around talking to teens about pregnancy and prevention, and providing them with a list of resources that they could look to for information.
Based on the results of the interview, it became apparent that having parents talk to their teens about topics like adverse outcomes, costs, and contraception would be a useful intervention.

I decided to tackle the issue by creating a booklet that could be handed to parents in order to help them inform themselves on 1. issues with teen pregnancy that they can talk to their teens about 2. contraception for sexually active teens, and 3. resources for the parents themselves to help them tackle what can sometimes be a difficult topic to talk to their children about.

The sources needed to be easy to access and informational regardless of education level.
RESULTS/RESPONSE

- From assigned MD preceptor: Having a page dedicated to educating parents on **HOW** they can approach talking to their teens about this topic is very useful. This is often a topic that is overlooked.

- From Erica Maillet (resident of Danbury and MA in the area): It's very useful to have a compiled list of several resources. It's educational and a quick read, making it more likely that people will read.
EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS/LIMITATIONS

- A proposed way to measure the effectiveness of the handout, would be to create a validated survey about the effectiveness of the educational materials.

- The booklet could be handed out in waiting rooms or as patients leave the visit. A preferably short survey (to increase responses) could be included in paper work handed to the patients at the next appointment.

- Another method would be for the provider, nurse, or medical assistant who rooms the patient to ask some of the questions and record the response. This would allow for some qualitative responses on the effectiveness.
EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS/LIMITATIONS

- Some of the limitations of this project include the lack of perspective about the intervention from at risk teens, or teens parents. Would have been a valuable resource to know what has or has not worked with them when it comes to education.

- Another limitation would be the list of resources being purely online sources. This could discriminate against families who might not have internet access, or access to a computer or web enabled device.

- Another limitation would be the lack of materials in languages other than English. Important to the Danbury area in particular due to its large Brazilian population.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

- Getting a larger number of providers from the WCH network to provide their input on a resource (such as this booklet) they would be willing to offer at their practices. This would enable the use of the same assessment survey to gauge the effectiveness of the resource being provided.

- With the increasing use of web enabled devices, a digital resource that compiles the information and that can be sent via email or text to patients would be very useful.
REFERENCES


