Author's response to reviews

Title: Levels and Patterns of Teenage Marital Pregnancy among Bangladeshi Women

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Responses to Reviewers’ Comments
In response to reviewers’ comments, we have made necessary changes (provided below). In the manuscript blue colored words/sentences indicate that these are included or rewritten whereas red colored words/sentences indicate that these are excluded from the original manuscript. In addition to the responses provided below (point by point responses to reviewers’ comments), we have revised the whole manuscript to edit. Blue and red colored words/sentences, in addition to point by point comments, indicate the changes during editing.

As per reviewer comments, we have also adjusted the title of the manuscript.

Responses to Review ONE

In response to query 1, we have reasoned for inclusion of women 15-29 years and exclusion of women aged 30+ years as follows:

We excluded 42.3% of the participants as inclusion of women aged >29 years could produce recall bias due to relative longer past event

In response to query 2, we have written with footnote as follows:

1 To understand participants’ education, interviewers asked whether they attended any formal school. Participants responded positive were considered as having education, while negative as having no education.
2 To understand participants’ occupation, interviewers asked them about their type of work. Response categories were 0. housewife, 1. government service, 2. private service and 9. others. As frequency for different working categories except housewife was very low, we merged all the working categories into a single category, i.e., working, whereas housewives were considered as not working.
3 Similar procedure to that of participants’ education was applied to know the status of husband’s education
4 To know participants’ family type, interviewers asked them whether they belong to nuclear or join family. By the joint family we mean a family where married women were living with other family members of husband, especially father, mother, brother and sister for the last one year. In contrast, nuclear family means a family where women were living with her husband and her children for the same period.
5 To know mass media exposure to participants, interviewers asked whether participants had exposure to media. Participants’ responses varied from no medium, 1 medium and more than one media.

In response to query 3, we have rewritten (blue colored) and excluded from the original text (red colored) as follows:

This is rather unexpected finding as contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) was higher five years ago [19 NIPORT et al, 2004]. compared to the current CPR [15 NIPORT et al, 2007] suggesting that women aged 20-24 years should have lower teen pregnancy due to higher CPR at that time. Perhaps this unexpected finding may be because of higher traditional contraceptive method use in five years ago compared to current situation where despite decreased CPR modern method relatively increased [15 NIPORT et al, 2007]. It is thus expected that due to the use of traditional method, there was high failure rate resulting in unintentional pregnancy among women aged 20-24 years who were within teenagers before
five years. Perhaps, women aged 15-19 years were exposed to family planning related information more than that of women aged 20-24 years, because of relative higher scope for information dissemination and higher educational opportunities. The lower likelihood for teen pregnancy among women aged 25-29 years may be differences in age at marriage. Further investigation of our data revealed that of the 102 women aged 15-19 years, 94 married at less than 18 years of age while 83 women out of 167 women aged 25-29 years married at less than 18 years of age.

**In response to query 4**, we have included a limitation as follows:

Finally, it is possible that women may not reveal exact age at teenage pregnancy occurred prior to the legal age at marriage (18 years). However, under-reporting may be less likely to affect the study findings as women who under-reported, if any woman under reported due to legal age at marriage, might have possibly reported it prior to 20 years of age as women married at 18 years can be pregnant in 18 and 19 years of age.

**In response to query 5**, we have carried out further cross tabulation analysis and written as follows:

(in this study, 5.7% women born in urban area were working against 2.3% in rural area)

**In response to query 6**, we have rewritten the reasons as follows:

*In addition, more over, women may neither become mother prior to marriage nor not reveal such highly sensitive information in Bangladesh context, even if women become mother pregnancy occurred prior to marriage*

**Responses to Reviewers TWO:**

**In response to query 1**, we have made necessary changes as follows:

1 To know mass media exposure to participants, interviewers asked whether participants had exposure to media. Participants’ responses varied from no medium, 1 medium and more than one media.

B =Beta Coefficient; SE=Standard Error, OR=Odds Ratio; CI=Confidence Interval

RC =Reference category

**In response to query 2**, we have made the following changes to discussion the factors in introduction:

Preventing teenage pregnancy is very important; however, relatively little is known about the risks associated with the teenage pregnancy in the developing countries [14]. Studies in developed country context identified that sexual and reproductive issues such as poor contraceptive knowledge and use, and early sexual debut affect early child bearing [1, 15]. Other studies reported negative association of education with teen pregnancy [1, 16]

**In response to query 4**, we made changes in desired number of children in conclusion:

In discussion we have highlighted several variables that came significant in the analysis. However, we emphasized on desired number of children because it had higher likelihood compared to other variables which, we think, necessitates its emphatic explanation.
In response to query 5, we changed our conclusion as follows:

Our study indicated found that majority of the women aged 15-29 years had experienced teenage marital pregnancy, indicating a serious public health concern. In addition, we identified that several factors contributed to the higher teenage pregnancy, such as including women’s age, desire number of children and birth place, necessitating the following issues to be considered to reduce teenage pregnancy.

In addition, we made changes in recommendation regarding reduction of desired number of children as follows:

Based on the findings of the present study, we recommend that intervention should be given to the reduction of desired number of children. As this study indicated that still half of the women desired for more than two children. Higher desired number of children leads women to have children immediately after marriage; more importantly, as desired number children is in more of cultural, there should a long term strategy to tackle this issue culturally. Community based campaign, as mass media exposure did not appear significant in multi-dimensional social settings, for limiting desired number of children within two may be considered. In this regard, disadvantages of higher desired number of children may be the content. However, prior to developing content, formative research would be necessary to provide culture specific information so that they are culturally easily accepted to women.

In response to query 5, we have made several changes in abstract:

In methods, the changes were as follows:
We excluded women aged more than 29 years on the assumption that they may provide data subjected to recall bias adolescent marital pregnancy may be a longer past event to them. In the analysis, we applied bi-variate and multi-variate logistic regression technique to find out odds ratio of teenage marital pregnancy.

In conclusion, the changes were as follows:
Based on the findings, we conclude that in order to reduce teenage marital pregnancy, consideration should be given on women’s desired number of children and birth place so that women’s desired number of children is limited to within two children, and that rural women get increased working and other related opportunities that may contribute in delaying teenage pregnancy.

Responses to specific comments of Reviewer TWO: In response, we made changes as follows:

1. We have deleted paragraph three and four almost altogether, as per reviewer’s comments.
2. We explained joint family, education and reported them in the above
3. We rewritten to mean screening as: Necessary screening was performed subsequently through frequency analysis to check data consistency and missing data. Although initial entry resulted in some missing data entry, we entered the missing data from the questionnaire following the serial number assigned to each of the collected questionnaire, prior to data entry.
4. We joined table 1 and 2 together (Table 1)
5. We exactly placed table 3 (which was later Table 2) at the right place, as per reviewer’s comment
6. We shorten the discussion where necessary