Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Natacha M De Genna

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This manuscript on teenage pregnancy in young Bangladeshi women addresses an area that needs further investigation. Little is known about fertility rates in Bangladeshi teenagers, even though they are highly likely to be married and starting families. Therefore, this paper is of importance for those investigators and policymakers interested in reducing Bangladeshi fertility rates, especially among teenaged wives.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. It is not clear to this reviewer why the investigators excluded women who were 30 years or older from this study. The authors state that these women are no longer considered “high fertility contributing women.” However, this appears to be a cross-sectional study, with women providing retrospective data on their age of first pregnancy. Therefore, the older women might still provide useful data on their own adolescent pregnancies. In fact, if the rate of teenage pregnancy has decreased, these older women should have reported more teenage pregnancies than the younger cohorts. Moreover, by using the same ages as the national surveys, it would have been possible to compare the data from this convenience sample to national data. It is a shame that 42% of the available population of married women was excluded from the study, and the justification provided by the authors is not very satisfactory.

2. The authors should also provide more details in the Methods section, so that readers can evaluate the measures and procedures used in the study. This will also facilitate replication of the study in Bangladesh and in other developing countries where teenage pregnancy is a concern. For example, what larger survey was this sample drawn from? What was the definition of education? What standard had to be obtained for a woman to be defined as educated? Was the interview for this study part of the larger survey? How many questions were asked for the current study? For occupation, was a woman coded as “1” only if she worked outside the home? Were jobs such as childcare (of other women’s children), laundry, sewing or handcrafts completed inside the home considered employment for the purposes of this study? What is the “enter” method of multi-variate logistic regression mentioned on page 4 of the manuscript? Does this mean that the authors forced all the variables in their study into the final model?
3. Discussion and conclusions were basically supported by the data, but this section left the reviewer with several unanswered questions. For example, it is not clear why the younger (15-19 years old) and older participants (25-29 years old) reported that they experienced less adolescent marital pregnancy than the middle age group (20-24 years old). Does this mean that Bangladeshi girls are marrying younger and/or having more children younger than they were 5-10 years ago, but are more likely to use birth control? How are they learning about birth control, if not through mass media? It would be interesting to know more about dissemination of information about family planning through other means, such as by their family members and health care providers. It would also be useful if the authors could report on pregnancy outcomes, i.e., how many pregnancies resulted in live births in the different groups of women.

4. Additionally, it is remarkable to this reviewer that most of the pregnancies occurred before the legal age for marriage. Is it possible that teenage pregnancy was even under-reported in the present study, if women were reluctant to disclose more than one underage pregnancy?

5. On page 7, the authors speculate that urban women might feel less social pressure to begin bearing children immediately after marriage because they could be working. However, only 8% of the participants were working (as reported on page 3 of the manuscripts). Were more urban women working than rural women?

6. It seems like a major omission to exclude reports of pregnancies in unmarried women. This should be listed as a limitation of the study in the third to last paragraph of the manuscript. The findings in this study can only be generalized to young married women, and not to all women aged 15-29 in Bangladesh.

Minor Essential Revisions

The writing is acceptable, but editing is necessary before publication. There are several typographical and grammatical errors.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.