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# Adolescent pregnancy and nursing care: an approach to the risks to maternal and newborn health

Embarazo adolescente y cuidados de enfermería: una aproximación a los riesgos para la salud materna y neonatal  
Gravidez na adolescência e a assistência de enfermagem: uma abordagem sobre os riscos à saúde materna e neonatal

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To address the risks that exist in teenage pregnancies that can compromise maternal and neonatal health, and the role of nurses in nursing care, aiming to minimize such risks. **Method:** The present research is a systematic review of the literature, with an exploratory characteristic, in which it sought to generate quantitative and qualitative data from the collected samples. **Result:** The analysis of the studies allowed for the systematization and discursive integration of data in three categories: a) teenage pregnancy and nursing care; b) teenage pregnancy and the risks to maternal and neonatal health; c) teenage pregnancy and the prevention of health risks for mothers and newborns. **Conclusion:** Considering the importance of recognizing the issues more related to the health of adolescents, it is possible to conclude that the health professional, through nursing assistance, has a fundamental role in counseling, education and taking preventive measures.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Pregnancy in adolescence. Health education. Health risk.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Abordar los riesgos que existen en los embarazos de adolescentes que pueden comprometer la salud materna y neonatal y el rol del enfermero en el cuidado de enfermería, buscando minimizar dichos riesgos. **Método:** La presente investigación es una revisión sistemática de la literatura, con carácter exploratorio, en la que se buscó generar datos cuantitativos y cualitativos a partir de las muestras recolectadas. **Resultado:** El análisis de los estudios permitió la sistematización e integración discursiva de datos en tres categorías: a) embarazo adolescente y cuidados de enfermería; b) embarazo adolescente y riesgos para la salud materna y neonatal; c) embarazo adolescente y prevención de riesgos para la salud de madres y recién nacidos. **Conclusión:** Considerando la importancia de reconocer los temas más relacionados con la salud de los adolescentes, es posible concluir que el profesional de la salud, a través de la asistencia de enfermería, tiene un rol fundamental en la asesoría, educación y toma de medidas preventivas.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Embarazo en adolescencia. Educación em salud. Riesgo a la salud.

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Abordar os riscos existentes em gestações na adolescência que podem comprometer a saúde materna e neonatal, e o papel do enfermeiro na assistência de enfermagem, visando minimizar tais riscos. **Método:** A presente pesquisa trata-se de uma revisão sistemática da literatura, de característica exploratória, na qual buscou gerar dados quantitativos e qualitativos das amostras coletadas. **Resultado:** A análise dos estudos permitiu a sistematização e integração discursiva dos dados em três categorias: a) gravidez na adolescência e a assistência de enfermagem; b) gravidez na adolescência e os riscos à saúde materna e neonatal; c) gravidez na adolescência e a prevenção dos riscos à saúde da mãe e do recém-nascido. **Conclusão:** Considerando a importância de reconhecer as questões mais relacionadas à saúde dos adolescentes, é possível concluir que o profissional de saúde, através da assistência de enfermagem, possui um papel fundamental de aconselhamento, educação e tomada de medidas preventivas.

**DESCRIPTORIOS:** Gravidez na adolescência. Educação em saúde. Riscos à saúde.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a phase of human life, characterized by numerous psychological, social, anatomical and metabolic changes, which leave the human being in an unknown state, it is in this phase that he stipulates references for a part of his adult life. These references are defined in the family, at school and in society, where teenagers are inspired to develop their personality.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, the topic that addresses teenage pregnancy has become an important discussion and target for public policies worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Whereas three out of ten adolescents initiate sexual life between 13 and 15 years of age,<sup>3</sup> this reflects on their health, which can contract from sexually transmitted infections to an early, unplanned, risky pregnancy.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics, there is a high pregnancy

rate in adolescence in Brazil compared to Latin America, with 400 thousand cases/year, and when related to the age of this population, the Ministry of Health reports that in 2014, 28.244 were born children of girls between 10 and 14 years old and 534,364 children of mothers between 15 and 19 years old. In the following year, 18% of Brazilians born alive were children of adolescent mothers. Regarding the demographic distribution, the region with the highest number of adolescent mothers is the Northeast region, with 180 thousand births or 32% of the total, followed by the Southeast region, with 179,2 thousand (32%), the North region with 81,4 thousand (14%), the South (62.475 - 11%) and the Midwest (43.342 - 8%).<sup>26</sup>

Such data is alarming and promotes concern, since adolescence and pregnancy are important stages for personal progress and human continuity. However, when both stages occur at

the same time, it can trigger a disruption in the development of this individual, since, early pregnancy requires strict emotional, physical and social loads, skipping the important stages of psychological and sexual maturity, commonly constituting a problem of public health in Brazil.<sup>5</sup>

Treating pregnancy as a condition of risk and adverse consequences at this stage of adolescence is of paramount importance and can reduce health problems during this process, as protective conditions can minimize the vulnerability of the mother and the newborn.<sup>6</sup> Based on what has been stated, early pregnancy in adolescence is treated as a public health problem, and all actions taken must be analyzed in a broader way, with the intention of surrounding the adolescent mother and the newborn child, and the risks that surround them.<sup>7</sup>

Amid a large number of teenage pregnancies, many of these lead to serious complications and even the dea-

th of pregnant women or newborns. <sup>6</sup> In view of this, the present study has a current and relevant discussion, since by making an analysis of the risks that this phenomenon may offer to pregnant adolescents, it will make it possible to highlight what is already understood on the subject, or even, what there is new about the theme. <sup>8</sup>

I see that, in this phase of life, understood by adolescence with constant changes and adaptations, pregnancy becomes a risk to the health of mothers and newborns, which can cause problems such as premature birth, anemia, miscarriage, eclampsia and depression post childbirth. <sup>9</sup> Thus, the present work aims to address the risks that exist in teenage pregnancies that can compromise maternal and neonatal health, and the role of nurses in nursing care, aiming to minimize such risks.

## METHODS

This research is a systematic review of the literature, with an exploratory characteristic, in which it sought to generate quantitative and qualitative data from the collected samples. This research used technical procedures, which made it possible to gather information and data that would assist in the theoretical foundation, delimitation of the problem, that would meet the established hypothesis and the proposed objective. <sup>10</sup>

In order to meet the research objective, the method for carrying out this work consisted of some distinct steps, following the specific protocol proposed in the literature, such as: delimitation of the issue to be addressed in the review; definition of key words; selection of bibliographic databases for consultation and collection of material; definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria; selection of texts and systematization of the information found; and data organization and analysis; all data were collected, processed, analyzed and described between

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en the months of August and November of the year 2020. <sup>10 and 11</sup>

The keywords used in the search for data were pre-established based on other studies carried out on the same theme, being: teenage pregnancy, health promotion, nursing care, pregnancy implications, risks to maternal health, health risks neonatal and nursing care. After delimiting the issue to be addressed and defining the keywords, the next step consisted in the selection of bibliographic databases, capable of providing adequate information for the purpose of this research. From then on, the collection of papers corresponding to the research theme was carried out on the CAPES journals portal, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Google Scholar (Google Scholar), to carry out a survey of all relevant literature to the theme, through the pre-defined descriptors (keywords).

The inclusion criteria (IC) were defined by the selection of articles that had been published in the period of ten years, which corresponds from 2010 to 2020, so that there was a more current perception regarding the theme. Publications that met the used and open access descriptors were also included. To complete the selection, it was decided to select only Brazilian articles written in Portuguese and published in peer-reviewed journals. The exclusion criteria (EC) used were articles that were not written in the Portuguese language and that were not peer-reviewed, in order to facilitate the understanding of researchers and articles that did not follow the theme addressed and the descriptors used in the databases. Studies that did not correspond to the selected search years and were not available for free access were also excluded.

After the search for the sources used in the research, the summary of this material was then read in advance, in order to select those that best suited the research theme. After the selection and reading of the material, they were recorded. At this moment,

the most important parts of the chosen material were selected, which met the object of the research and fit the research plan.

The organization and analysis of the data proceeded according to the steps proposed for the systematic research of the literature, with the extraction of the data made by means of a preliminary bibliographic survey and subsequent elaboration of the provisional research plan. For this purpose, he used the Excel © software

(2016) to tabulate the articles found and perform the qualitative analysis. In addition, a quantitative analysis of the articles selected from the databases was applied, using the applications of EC and IC.

## RESULTS

In the preliminary bibliographic survey, carried out in the databases with the keywords previously described, 178 articles were found, of which,

after previous filtering, 128 articles were selected to compose the study sample. Through the inclusion and exclusion criteria, only 15 articles were analyzed, which met the purpose of this study. Of the fifteen articles analyzed, most correspond to the type of cross-sectional observational research and systematic literature review. Regarding the publication period of the selected studies, the highest occurrence was for the year 2010, with 26,7% selected articles. The selected material was organized and subjected to critical reading, with an individual systematization, as shown in Table 1.

## DISCUSSION

The nursing process consists of a series of steps, such as: collecting multi-dimensional information about health conditions, identifying situations that require nursing interventions, planning necessary interventions, implementing and evaluating interventions, among other actions, whose actions objective is to provide the community with a service in order to contemplate its singularities.<sup>17</sup> When we bring this systematization to the scope of teenage pregnancy and maternal and neonatal care, the health professional, through nursing care, goes beyond newborn hygiene care and administration of prescribed medications.<sup>16</sup>

This process of nursing work in maternal and neonatal care is often not recognized.<sup>16</sup> Corroborating this discussion, some authors address how indispensable this professional is in nursing care for teenage pregnancies, promoting general and local care, assessing the adolescent's physical and mental state, observing issues such as rest, walking, food and preparation patient to hospital discharge.<sup>18</sup> Added to this, also, the guidelines regarding breast care, with the perineum, sexual activity, puerperal consultation, family planning and monitoring of the baby's health.<sup>19</sup>

It is possible to assume that most

Table 1. Summary of studies found in the databases consulted.

Autores	Tipo de estudo	Síntese do estudo
12	Descritivo e caráter exploratório	Analisou as práticas do enfermeiro na prevenção da gravidez precoce
13	Exploratório e abordagem qualitativa	Identificou e analisou as consequências objetivas e subjetivas de uma gravidez em adolescentes
14	Observacional e transversal	Investigou a importância da gravidez na adolescência como um problema de saúde
15	Qualitativo, com abordagem bibliográfica	Analisou os fatores determinantes da evasão escolar decorrente da gravidez precoce
16	Exploratório e abordagem qualitativa	Investigou as percepções de puérperas adolescentes sobre a assistência da enfermagem
17	Revisão sistemática da literatura	Sistematização da assistência de enfermagem, com a intenção de uso por profissionais da área
18	Quantitativo e abordagem exploratória	Identificou as ações utilizadas pelos enfermeiros para a prevenção da gravidez na adolescência
19	Revisão integrativa e natureza qualitativa	Buscou conhecer acerca do papel do enfermeiro na assistência prestada às adolescentes gestantes
20	Exploratório descritivo	Identificou as principais consequências da gravidez enfrentadas pelas adolescentes
21	Revisão sistemática da literatura	Avaliou o impacto da gravidez na primeira fase da adolescência sobre parâmetros clínicos
22	Observacional e transversal	Avaliou a associação entre gravidez de adolescentes e a ocorrência de nascidos vivos de baixo peso, prematuridade e cesariana
23	Pesquisa de campo com realização de entrevistas	Analisou os fatores de risco para mortalidade fetal e infantil, com atenção especial ao papel da gravidez na adolescência nessa relação
6	Revisão sistemática da literatura	Avaliou as complicações relacionadas à gravidez na adolescência
24	Observacional e transversal	Identificou os fatores associados à gestação na adolescência
25	Observacional e analítico	Analisou a associação da gravidez na adolescência com prematuridade

Source: Developed by the authors of this research, 2020.

pregnant adolescents do not have knowledge about the complications and consequences that pregnancy at this stage of life can bring.<sup>20</sup> In view of this, it is noticeable the importance of health professionals, especially nurses, who, being closer to the patients, have a role of education, guidance and encouragement about the adolescents, solving any doubts. This only reinforces what has already been said and demonstrates how fundamental nursing care in adolescent pregnancy is.

Adolescent pregnancy, as previously discussed in the present study, is the cause of several physical, social and psychological changes in the adolescent's life. In general, management is classified as biological risk, especially for adolescent mothers.<sup>15</sup> At this stage of life, the female body is still in the process of development, mainly the reproductive organs, which after a period of maturity are ready to reproduce normally, without risk of health to the pregnant woman and the baby.<sup>13</sup>

Analyzing the results exposed by some studies consulted in the databases, these revealed some maternal and neonatal clinical risks/complications due to teenage pregnancy. The compilation of data allowed us to highlight at least six and seven risks that can infer the adolescent mother and the newborn, respectively. These are: maternal risk (anemia, postpartum hemorrhage, pre-eclampsia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, diabetes and urinary/vaginal infection); neonatal risk (premature birth, low birth weight, small for gestational age, depressed vitality, neonatal malformation, neonatal death and intrauterine growth retardation).<sup>6, 21, 22 and 23</sup>

Other studies corroborate the present discussion, and point out that neonatal and maternal risks, related to teenage pregnancy, suggest multiple interferences, to be verified by the family nucleus, social insertion, marital status and patient's health status.<sup>24 and 25</sup> Despite this, there is also the possibility of

**Regarding the risks to maternal and neonatal health, it is reported that adolescence is not an aggravating factor for the poor obstetric results obtained in his study. The percentage of abortion, prematurity, maternal and/or neonatal mortality, are characteristics that involve a number of factors, not only adolescence. Linked to this, the conditions of prenatal care, by the health team, is a point that must be taken into account.**

developing social and family problems, which is worth mentioning in this discussion. These factors usually lead to consequences such as dropping out of school and difficulty attending school during and/or after pregnancy, as adolescent mothers will face challenges related to maternal responsibilities in school activities.<sup>15</sup>

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Before we talk about the prevention of risks to the health of the mother and the newborn, it is important to highlight the relevance of health education as prevention of pregnancy in adolescence, being this a primary action in the prevention of risks that may come to affect both the mother like the newborn. Sex education enables positive results through participation, reflection and understanding of the importance of responsible sexual life and self-protection among adolescent couples. The work of guidance and education in promoting the health of adolescents in Family Health centers is the most efficient action in preventing an early pregnancy, and consequently, future risks to the health of the mother and the newborn.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The health professional, through nursing assistance, has a fundamental role in counseling, education and taking preventive measures. The risks that can affect the adolescent mother and the newborn are, for the most part, of the biological order, and have an interaction of multiple factors, such as the mother's social situation, the family



component in which she is inserted and the state health of both. Added to this, teenage pregnancy can also have consequences such as the child's hel-

plessness and abandonment, emotional problems related to the mother, school leaving, unemployment or the loss of future prospects in the professional

sphere, and finally, the multiparity in a short period of time, which may worsen the whole situation described in the present study. ■

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