Teenage Pregnancy Essay, Research Paper

Over the past few years teenage pregnancy rates have grown substantially. More than one million teenagers will become pregnant this year in Canada, and the number is growing. Many socioeconomic factors influence pregnancy rates, such as; different races,

different religions, financial status, education and family background. Another influence is the sexual education children are receiving or not receiving at school and at home. While

the problem of teenage pregnancy is acknowledged, solutions are coming slowly.

Some parents feel that pregnancy is a result of the lack of sex education courses taught in schools, while others feel that these courses end up encouraging teenagers to become sexually active. Studies have been done to find out just how important sex education courses are, and what effect they have on pregnancy rates. The amount of sex education they receive is not as important a factor, according to a new study. (Fewer girls get pregnant when involved in community, E8) Toronto Sun, 1998) Other sources say:

Sex education courses, advocated to prevent teen pregnancy but denounced as encouraged sexual interest, appear to have little or no effect on teens sexual activity. Such courses also have no noticeable effect on contraceptive use and pregnancy rates among teenagers. It was found that while students do learn about sex and contraception, they do not appear to alter their behavior. (Okie, 1996)

The courses that are offered in schools have proven not to have any influence on the teenage pregnancy rates. The reason for this may be that the courses are just not being taught effectively or are targeting the wrong age group:

Two major goals of the school sex education programs are to reduce the incidence of unwarranted pregnancy as well as the rates of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. However, to be effective, programs must begin early. If we wait until an age when most adolescents are sexually active, we might have to combat an acquired behavioral pattern of ineffective STD/pregnancy prevention behavior. Some statistics found that in the 1984 survey of school

superintendents found that children do not all seem to know what we expect them to know.

It was found that 50% of schools offered a family life education program. Whereas 87% of urban districts had a program, only 25% of rural districts had a program. Canadian school children ages 9, 12 and 15 showed a considerable lack of sexual education. Only 35% of grade 7 students knew that is was possible for a

girl to get pregnant between the ages of 12 and 15. Most thought pregnancy could not occur until after age 16. (Herold, 1997)

Through many studies it has been proven that sex education in schools has little or no noticeable effect on the teen pregnancy rate.

The conclusion has been made that the rate of teenage pregnancy is rising, but there is no solution in sight. Many thought having sex education in the schools would reduce the rate but statistics have suggested that they will not. There have been

suggestions of other ways of reducing the high rates. Sexual counseling and access to prevention (Beard, 1992) could be tried. In the mid-1970 s the Ontario government started to provide universal access to publicly funded family planning and sex education. (Beard, 1992) If these were used in combination with school sexuality education it has been predicted that a decrease in the pregnancy rate would occur. Changes in the social

climate , (MacDonald, 1996), which teenagers have been exposed to have been linked with rising adolescent pregnancy rates. These forces must be understood if we are to avoid to obvious pitfalls, draw successfully on our traditional social and cultural strengths,

and design effective models of prevention.