

## **ABSTRACT**

After a constant decline in fertility rates among 15-19 year old Jamaican females from 1975 to 1989, there was in 1993 a sharp increase in births to this group of women. These increases come at a time when sexuality education programmes are taught in schools and contraceptives have been made more readily available to teenagers.

Teenagers continue to be a group at risk for medical complications of pregnancy, not because of their age per se, but because of specific factors that are more common to them.

A case control study was conducted attempting to examine ways in which the family and other factors may influence the occurrence of pregnancies among teenagers.

Among the pregnant and the non-pregnant teens there were equal levels of knowledge and use of contraceptives.

It was demonstrated that the pregnant teens were more likely to have mothers who were themselves teenaged mothers (OR=2.7,p=.02) to live away from their parents (OR=3.4,p=.01) and to have had no discussions with their parents about human sexuality (OR=3.0,p=.03).

These findings indicate that the early socialization of our young people, one of the functions of the family, is an important factor that impacts on the norms and behaviour patterns adopted by our young people.