

Factors Affecting Age at Menarche
and its Relationship to Other Indicators of Fertility
of Teenage Females in the August Town Community
Jamaica

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent fertility has been of major concern in Jamaica and worldwide. This study attempts to identify factors associated with age at menarche and to examine the relationship between menarcheal age and ages of first intercourse and first conception. This study was performed in the August Town community with a sample of 201 girls (aged 10-18 years) and their mothers or guardians.

Age at menarche appeared to have decreased by more than a year between mothers and daughters. No association was found with socio-economic status or with genetic factors.

Age at menarche was positively correlated with nutritional status, age at first intercourse and at first pregnancy, but not with socio-economic status or genetic factors.

It was recommended that since age at menarche and child-bearing was occurring earlier each generation, innovative programmes aimed at the rapidly changing attitudes of younger adolescents will become necessary, and that an inter-sectoral approach could be useful.