

Assessment of Social Media Influence on Termination of Pregnancy by Teenagers in Nyalenda Slums, Kisumu County

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ABSTRACT:

Sub-Saharan Africa leads with 143 per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years giving birth annually. In Kenya, 17.7% of 19-year-olds have begun childbearing; with 27% of adolescents in Nyanza by 2010. This study involved 71 teenagers aged between 13 and 19. Focusing on teenagers on social media, the study established; incidences of pregnant teenagers; information contribution on pregnancy termination; knowledge and attitude on pregnancy termination; and pregnancy termination practices. Working with community based psychosocial support groups as link points (purposively sampled); snowball was applied to identify other respondents – in-depth interviews conducted between April and August 2014. The unit of analysis was teenagers who lived in the slums, had terminated pregnancy, and were active on social media for at least 4 years. The Social Learning Theory guided this research. 73.2% of teenagers had terminated pregnancy, with 63.4% at the first trimester. 71.9% acknowledge four social media applications, 94.4% favored Facebook; with an average of 150 friends. 81.7% met new people, found old friends, shared pictures, videos, and games in their network. 81.7% confirmed their selfie were most favorable uploads, targeting boyfriend, and pregnant teenagers. 73.3% indicated their selfies encouraged peers to terminate pregnancy. 93% of teenagers who contemplated termination chatted most with peer on how best to terminate pregnancy. 69.1% learnt of safe methods, and related health complications, thereafter, 76.1% planning to termination at early stage under expertise care. After termination, 53.5% started using contraception, and talked about safe termination methods. 67.6% encouraged their network on contraception for unwanted pregnancy. Social media platform proved to be an emerging health communication avenue for pregnant teenagers. Teenagers who discuss pregnancy termination on social media end up with safe processes. Include structured social media health packages in development programs targeting teenagers.

Key words: Social, media, pregnancy, termination, teenagers.