

CONSCIOUS ADOLESCENCE: PREVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE PREGNANCY AT HUMBERTO DE CAMPOS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL

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Abstract: The field research focused on teenage pregnancy had the general objective of sensitizing and educating the school community about the challenges associated with early pregnancy, promoting prevention, quality of life formation, and appropriate support. To achieve these objectives, the research utilized an exploratory and descriptive methodology, employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. During the research, questionnaires

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and interviews were conducted to collect data on students' knowledge about contraceptive methods, the consequences of teenage pregnancy, and the importance of family planning. Additionally, discussion groups were held to promote open dialogue about sexuality, prevention, and support for pregnant teenagers. The findings indicated significant gaps in understanding of contraceptive methods, family planning, and the implications of teenage pregnancy among the participants. Consequently, most participants expressed a need for more information and educational resources on the subject. The educational and awareness activities were well-received, and participants reported an improved understanding of the issues addressed. The research also highlighted the importance of adequate support for pregnant teenagers, emphasizing the need for emotional and social support in schools. Thus, the field research not only contributed to raising awareness about teenage pregnancy but also provided practical directions for future interventions, focusing on preventive education and support for pregnant teenagers within the school environment.

Keywords: Teenage pregnancy. Adolescence. Prevention. Sexual education.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition characterized by significant physical, emotional and social transformations, as young people leave childhood to enter the adult world. This is a time full of curiosity for new experiences and the search for autonomy. However, not all of these new experiences are positive. Studies by Oliveira (2017) and Taborda et al., (2014) highlight that early pregnancy represents one of the main challenges faced by adolescents. According to data from the Ministry of Health, Brazil records one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the world, which requires urgent attention to better understand the causes, consequences and effective strategies for preventing this condition. According to Oliveira (2017), it is necessary to recognize that, although adolescence offers opportunities for growth, it also presents challenges such as early pregnancy, which can significantly



limit the future dreams of teenagers.

Teenage pregnancy is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves social, emotional and health aspects. Historically, this condition was seen as a problem to be avoided at all costs, with young pregnant women often facing social stigma, exclusion and emotional difficulties. Over time, there was a shift towards a more understanding and empathetic approach (Lima e Silva, 2020). Data indicate that the fertility rate among adolescents is high, especially in poorer countries, such as those in Latin America. According to the Child and Adolescent Statute (Law No. 8069/90), adolescents are individuals between 12 and 18 years old, and for the World Health Organization (WHO), this period encompasses ages between 10 and 19 years old (Lima and Silva, 2020).

During adolescence, young people go through significant physical changes, such as the development of sexual organs and hormonal changes, in addition to cognitive and social transformations, which include questioning beliefs and the search for their own identity (Macedo et al., 2013). This period is marked by personal discovery and definition of future goals, which includes exploring sexuality.

Ximenes Neto et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of recognizing the heterogeneous and behavioral patterns of adolescents, such as sexual development, personality affirmation and the construction of life projects. The lack of natural evolution of these processes can lead to transgressions such as drug use and unprotected sexual practices, resulting in unwanted pregnancies and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Sexuality education appears as a strong ally in preventing teenage pregnancy, providing young people with accurate information, skills and resources necessary for healthy decisions regarding sexuality and contraception (Dadorian, 2003). Research is essential to understand how this education can raise awareness about the risks of early pregnancy, especially in regions like Eunápolis-BA, where the rate of teenage pregnancy is alarming (SINASC, 2015).

Teenage pregnancy in Bahia is worsened by specific socioeconomic and cultural factors, such as an unbalanced family structure, limited education, the use of substances such as alcohol and



drugs, and economic disadvantage (Cruz et al., 2022). With a scenario of economic inequalities and disparities in access to health services, Bahia faces unique challenges in combating youth pregnancy (Oliveira et al., 2014).

This study seeks to explore the components and impacts of teenage pregnancy in the state of Bahia, providing a broad analysis that aims to identify effective strategies for preventing and mitigating the effects of this problem, ensuring the well-being and healthy development of adolescents in Bahia.

METHODOLOGY

The field research carried out for this study is exploratory and descriptive in nature, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The main objective was to investigate the factors associated with early pregnancy and evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions in raising awareness and prevention among 8th year students at Escola Municipal Humberto de Campos, in Eunápolis.

The study involved 28 8th grade students, chosen to reflect the characteristics of the adolescent population in relation to early pregnancy. The necessary authorizations were obtained from the school management, and the participants and their guardians signed a free and informed consent form, as well as an image and voice use term.

Data collection was carried out in several stages, using different instruments. Firstly, a structured questionnaire was applied to assess students' knowledge about sexual education, their perceptions about early pregnancy, the use of contraceptive methods and family planning. This questionnaire aimed to assess the level of information among adolescents on the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, with eight dichotomous questions answered individually in the classroom in an average time of 20 minutes.

At the first meeting, an educational lecture was given by students from the first period of the medicine course at Faculdade Pitágoras, who addressed the topics of sexual education and prevention of teenage pregnancy. After the lecture, a conversation circle was opened so that students



could ask their questions and discuss the issues presented, promoting an environment of dialogue and learning. In the second meeting, the students watched the documentary “Girls: Pregnancy in Adolescence”, which tells the story of four pregnant teenagers and their changes in routine. After the screening, the students were invited to write their individual reflections on the most striking points of the documentary, which facilitated an open discussion about the risks and consequences of early pregnancy. In the third and final meeting, a feedback session was conducted to share the results obtained with the participants, promoting transparency in the research process. , graphs with the students’ responses were presented and explained, allowing an in-depth reflection on the information learned. Furthermore, an educational theater was organized with extension students representing the difficulties faced by pregnant teenagers, providing a practical and empathetic view of the challenges involved.

The collected data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The responses to the forms were treated statistically, with the calculation of frequencies and means. The qualitative data, coming from the written perceptions and oral reports of the participants, were analyzed thematically, identifying recurring patterns and themes in the students’ responses.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data allowed a comprehensive understanding of the factors associated with early pregnancy and the effectiveness of the educational interventions carried out. This holistic approach contributed to the development of more effective strategies for preventing teenage pregnancy, making the research not only fulfill its educational objectives, but also provide practical interventions to support pregnant teenagers within the school environment.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

To support the research and substantiate the analyses, the conceptual basis was supported by studies by Guimarães and Witter (2007), Ximenes Neto et al., (2007), Camargo (2009), Lima e Silva (2020), Oliveira (2017) , Taborda et al. (2014), Cruz (2016), Yazlle (2006), Gonçalves (2013),



Bortolozzi and Vilaça (2020), Fiedler (2015), Schmitz (2013), Araújo (2019) and Queiroz (2016) among others, who study teenage pregnancy and the variable factors that may contribute to high incidence rates. These studies provide a broad view of the multifaceted aspects that influence the occurrence of teenage pregnancy, covering individual, family and social factors.

According to Guimarães and Witter (2007), teenage pregnancy is not the result of a single or simple cause, but rather a tangle of intertwined factors, including ignorance, lack of knowledge about sexuality and contraception. Gaps in sexuality education leave young people vulnerable to ill-informed decisions, often based on myths or taboos. In addition to educational gaps, peer pressure is also a significant force, as cultural or social norms may promote early sexual experimentation or pregnancy as rites of passage into adulthood. In such contexts, going against these norms can mean facing resistance from the community itself. The lack of open dialogue and effective sexual education is a problem that needs to be addressed to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy.

Ximenes Neto et al., (2007) complements the analysis by emphasizing that the period of adolescence is marked by crises that can result in transgressions, such as the use of substances and unprotected sexual relations. Camargo (2009) adds that the intense changes that adolescents experience often lead them to unprotected sexual practices, driven by a life lived intensely and without due awareness of the risks. These behaviors are exacerbated by a lack of communication between adolescents and their families, as well as taboos that prevent open discussions about sexuality. This tangle of factors, as corroborated by the studies cited, needs to be addressed through educational interventions and public policies that promote inclusive and accessible sexual education.

Regarding the crucial influence of socioeconomic factors, Lima and Silva (2020) emphasizes the incidence of pregnancy among adolescents, highlighting the barriers to access to education, information and economic opportunities as determinants. The urgency of comprehensive public policies that address such disparities and provide adequate support to teenage mothers or young people in vulnerable situations is highlighted. In a similar way, Oliveira (2017) corroborates this perspective when discussing the importance of socioeconomic aspects in the specific context of the



state of Bahia, highlighting their direct relationship with issues such as access to health, information, educational level, career development and family planning.

The study by Taborda et al., (2014) highlights that unfavorable financial conditions play a significant role in increasing teenage pregnancy rates. Such conditions affect young people's access to adequate prenatal care, increasing the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, limited information about family planning, contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted infections contributes to adolescents' vulnerability to unplanned pregnancies, while the absence of appropriate emotional and educational support can result in hasty decisions regarding their sexual life.

Cruz (20 22) highlights that adolescents with unfavorable socioeconomic status, especially those living in peripheral areas, face greater risks of unplanned pregnancy and its consequences. In the Bahian context, early pregnancy is recognized as a serious public health issue, with significant impacts on the lives of young women and society. Alarming epidemiological data indicate high rates of teenage pregnancy in Bahia, requiring the urgent implementation of effective interventions and policies aimed at addressing this worrying scenario and its social, educational and health ramifications.

The crucial role of parents is a focal point in studies by Silva et al., (2014) as the family is essential in guiding and supporting adolescents during pregnancy, directly influencing their decisions and behaviors. Parents have a fundamental responsibility for creating a family environment that fosters open communication and emotional support, allowing adolescents to share their concerns, ask questions, and receive appropriate guidance. By demonstrating understanding, support and acceptance in the face of their children's pregnancy, parents contribute significantly to the emotional and psychological well-being of adolescents. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of parents to provide accurate information about sexual and reproductive health, contraceptive methods and available options to pregnant teenagers, enabling them to make informed decisions about their health and family planning.

With regard to the National Curricular Parameters (PCN), although they do not prescribe



a specific approach, they recommend that, from the 5th year of elementary school, topics related to sexuality be discussed in a participatory manner by adolescents in an appropriate environment. It will be up to the educator to organize the activity, including relevant topics not previously mentioned by the students. This initiative aims to provide a space for dialogue, clarification and reflection on issues that promote the reinterpretation of information, emotions and values acquired throughout life (BRASIL, 1998).

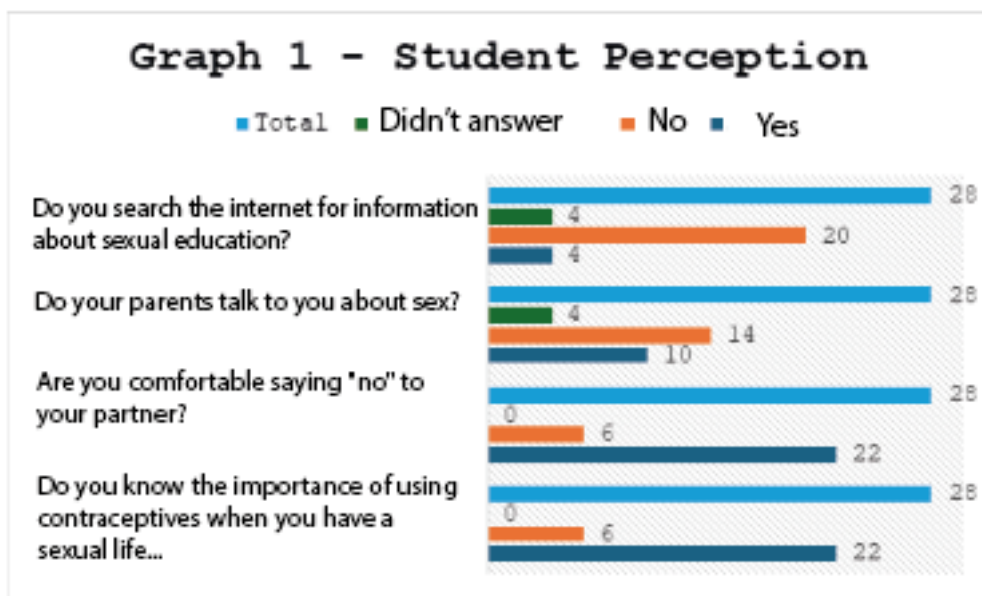
Additionally, the PCN highlight the relevance of approaching sexuality at school from a socio-historical perspective, revisiting norms, gender standards and identity. The intention is to foster respect, ensure sexual rights and eliminate situations of prejudice and violence, promoting a more inclusive and respectful school environment (BRASIL, 1998).

The application of the questionnaire on sexual education, aiming to understand the identification of students in terms of gender, revealed significant results: among the 28 participants, 12 (43%) identified themselves as female, 10 (36%) as male and 6 (21%) did not identify with any gender. The analysis of these responses highlights a marked diversity in the gender identities of the participants, reflecting a heterogeneous group composition in this aspect. This panorama highlights the complexity and variety of experiences experienced by adolescents in the contemporary educational environment, emphasizing the importance of an inclusive and sensitive approach in sexual education programs. It is essential that such programs recognize and validate the diversity of gender identities, ensuring representation and respect for all students (Miranda and Barros, 2019). Furthermore, it is necessary to adapt educational materials and methods to address the specific experiences and challenges faced by students with different gender identities.

In the social sphere, teenagers face significant obstacles. Poor access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, especially in rural or low-income regions, restricts the availability of practical contraceptive methods and appropriate counseling. According to Guimarães and Witter (2007), poverty and gender inequality increase the vulnerability of adolescents to early pregnancy, impacting their educational and economic choices.



In Graph 1, it is possible to observe the relationship between students in relation to seeking information about safe sexual practices, preventing unwanted pregnancies and talking to parents about sex. Of the students who responded to the questionnaire, 20 (72%) stated that they did not seek information about sexual education online, while 4 (14%) indicated that they did so and 4 (14%) did not respond. Regarding the willingness to talk to their parents about the topic, 10 (36%) students expressed comfort in addressing this issue, while 14 (50%) denied this practice. The lack of sexual orientation, whether on the part of the family or school, constitutes a path to misinformation, exposing adolescents to risks, such as the interruption of future life projects, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, among others. These situations can have significant social impacts on the lives of these adolescents.

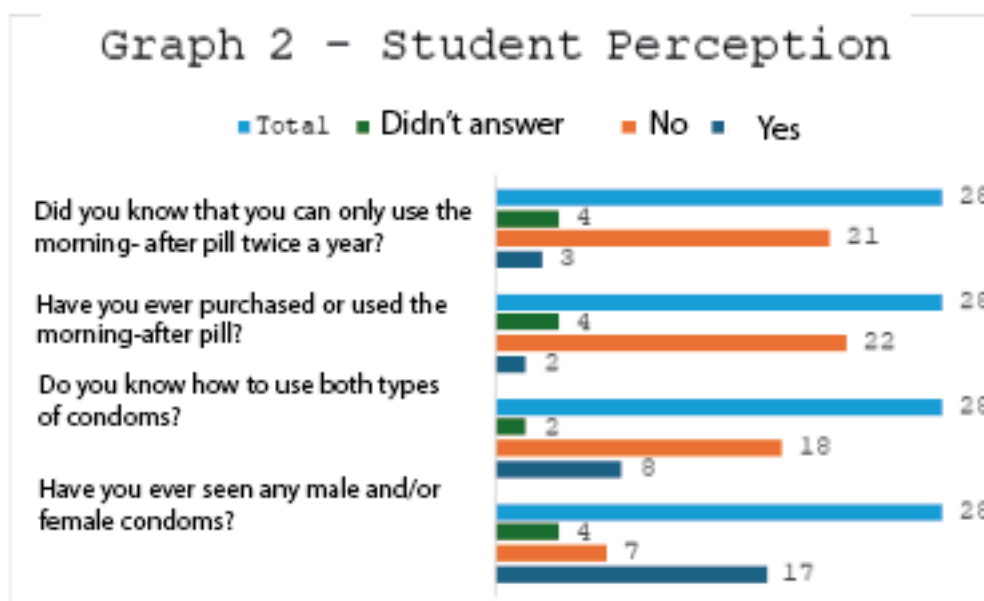


Source: Field research, 2024.

A total of 22 students, representing around 78%, stated that they felt comfortable expressing themselves negatively towards their partner. The lack of emotional maturity in adolescents makes them more susceptible to possible manipulations by their partners. Furthermore, it was found that 22



students (78%) recognized the importance of using contraceptive methods and confirmed that they maintained an active sexual life. According to Ximenes Neto et al., (2007), the early start of sexual life in adolescents is directly related to a greater probability of pregnancy. Notably, the age range of teenagers who begin their sexual life early and end up getting pregnant, between 14 and 16 years old, coincides with the age range of teenagers at Escola Municipal Humberto de Campos, the location of the research. The occurrence of pregnancy in this context is due to the lack of access to contraceptive methods, financial restrictions and the fear of seeking health services to obtain condoms or other forms of contraception, resulting in misinformation about safe and preventive sexual practices.



Source: Field research, 2024.

As shown in Graph 2, the majority of students, 17 (61%), stated that they had witnessed both male and female condoms. However, despite having had contact with condoms, 18 (64%) of the students admitted that they did not know how to use it, while only 8 (29%) indicated that they understood its use. These results corroborate the findings of Fiedler et al., (2015), which revealed that adolescents are aware of the existence of condoms, but demonstrate a lack of understanding about



their correct use, suggesting a lack of effective sexual education in the environments frequented by these adolescents. teenagers.

Regarding the morning-after pill, 22 (79%) students stated that they had never purchased or used the medication, while 2 (8%) confirmed that they had used it. These data echo the research by Schmitz (2013), which demonstrated that the majority of participants did not resort to the morning-after pill.

When asked whether students were aware that the use of the morning-after pill is recommended only twice a year, 21 (75%) responded that they were unaware of this information, while 3 (11%) stated that they were aware. These results are in line with the study by Queiroz et al., (2017), which showed that the majority of students surveyed were aware of the contraceptive method, but had difficulties in using it appropriately.

All questions addressed in the questionnaires highlight significant aspects for the general context of sexual education and adolescent health, emphasizing the importance of implementing more comprehensive and enlightening educational programs.

Regarding the importance of contraceptives: “Do you recognize the importance of using contraceptives when maintaining an active sexual life?” The relevance of this question lies in the fact that understanding the need to correctly use contraceptives can prevent unwanted pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections, as highlighted by Luz et al., (2019). This awareness reflects concern about maintaining healthy sexual health and the ability to make appropriate plans for the future.

In Graph 4, the question addressed the importance of family planning and the necessary support from the family to raise a baby. It was highlighted that responsibility for the child should not fall solely on the mother, but must be shared with the father. This approach highlights the need for involvement of both parents and family support. Of the participants, 22 (79%) stated that the responsibility for the pregnancy should not be attributed solely to the girl, while 2 (7%) thought the opposite. These results highlight a relevant perception about the sharing of responsibilities,

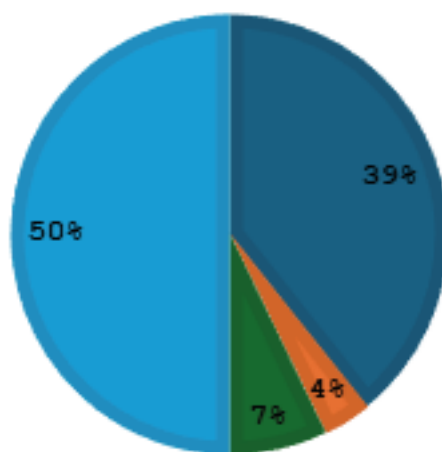


emphasizing the importance of education about coparenting and mutual support between future parents to guarantee the child's well-being and the healthy structuring of the family.

Graph 4 – Distribution of responses about family planning

THE GIRL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREGNANCY

■ Yes ■ No ■ Didn't answer ■ Total (100%)



Source: Field research, 2024.

In the second meeting, which included the screening of a documentary followed by written records by the participants, several fundamental concerns emerged among them. Many expressed surprise at the high incidence of teenage pregnancies, signaling a perception that this is a prevalent and highly impactful phenomenon. Concern was observed about the behavior of pregnant teenagers attending parties and initiating sexual relations early, highlighting a lack of guidance and support, as well as possible misinformation about the implications of these actions. The simplified view that motherhood would be easy expressed by some participants suggests a lack of awareness about the complex challenges and responsibilities associated with parenthood. The impacts on the lives



of adolescents and their families are significant, especially with regard to continuing their studies, which can compromise the future of these young women. The perception that a teenager's body is not prepared for pregnancy highlights the physical risks involved, while the lack of protection during sexual intercourse and the lack of responsibility on the part of the babies' parents were highlighted as critical issues.

After the discussion, we provided sheets to the students asking them to share three other perspectives or positive aspects that they considered relevant in the documentary shown, points that they found most pertinent or intriguing. We extract some excerpts from the perceptions :

Table 1 - 3 Perspectives or Positive Aspects of Dynamics - Documentary

Answer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – Girls’ lack of awareness of not using condoms” “2 – Mothers support their daughters” “3 – Not thinking about their future”
Answer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – Mothers support their daughters” “2 – Not having used a condom” “3 – The girls got pregnant very early”
Answer 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – I noticed that many young girls who got involved with boys who are in the wrong life, ended up destroying their dreams and getting pregnant very early, having their lives destroyed and in the end end up having a child while being a child”
Answer 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – Even though the parents didn’t accept it, they helped” “2 – They have self-esteem” “3 – She got him out of crime”
Answer 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – Many girls have disrupted dreams due to pregnancy and a lack of attention and instruction from their parents about this, by not talking about the subject with them”
Answer 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – There is a huge age difference, the girl is 14 and the guy is 21” “2 – The age at which the girls became pregnant was very young, normally 13/14 years old” “3 – The precarious condition of their homes”
Answer 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – He gave up crime for her” “2 – She got pregnant when she was 13” “3 – Him falling in love with her even though he’s a flirt”
Answer 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “1 – Less than” “2 – Most of the boys they get involved with are involved with the wrong things” “3 – They don’t worry about ruining their lives” “4 – Prevent yourself”



Answer 9	<p>“1 – Shows the importance of prevention”</p> <p>“2 – Shows that we need to have more responsibility”</p> <p>“3 – Most of the girls in the documentary live in favelas and get involved with the wrong people”</p>
Answer 10	<p>“1 – Girls getting involved with the wrong people”</p> <p>“2 – Girls not taking care of themselves”</p> <p>“3 – And how much each girl still has her childish side, which unfortunately did not make the most of her childhood”</p>
Answer 11	<p>“1 – I found it interesting that the girls don’t care, in my case I would be desperate”</p>
Answer 12	<p>“1 – The age difference between the girl and the boy”</p> <p>“2 – The conditions they lived in”</p> <p>“3 – Minors getting pregnant”</p>
Answer 13	<p>“1 – The fact that these girls are not desperate, having thrown everything into the air”</p> <p>“2 – The fact that they only choose drug dealers to have a life”</p> <p>“3 – The fact that mothers are there to support us despite everything”</p>
Answer 14	<p>“1 – Men leaving drug trafficking to protect their children”</p> <p>“2 – A teenager’s body is not prepared for pregnancy”</p> <p>“3 – Unprotected relationship”</p>
Answer 14	<p>“1 – One of the girls took her boyfriend out of the crime”</p> <p>“2 – She was sensitive about saying she was pregnant”</p>
Answer 15	<p>“1 – The girls’ mothers saying things”</p> <p>“2 – The boy left the wrong life”</p>
Answer 16	<p>“1 – I understood when the father of one of the girls went to talk to the child’s father so he could leave the world of crime so he could take care of his family, and prevent him from dying in this life. This documentary was good to show about girls who get pregnant when they are 15 years old, and that we should protect ourselves about this”</p>
Answer 17	<p>“1 – I liked that some parents accepted their children”</p> <p>“2 – I also liked that the young mother decided not to abort her child”</p> <p>“3 – And because one of the guys gave up crime for his son”</p>
Answer 18	<p>“1 – They don’t think about their future and that it could really interfere with their future”</p> <p>“2 – They got pregnant by someone who didn’t have a good life to take on responsibilities as a father, only one of them got involved with someone who was ok, from what I saw”</p> <p>“3 – They are too young to have had a relationship”</p>
Answer 19	<p>“1 – Situation of most teenagers”</p> <p>“2 – The suffering of childbirth”</p> <p>“3 – Lack of interest among teenagers in continuing their studies, others with their dreams destroyed”</p>

Source: Field research, 2024.



These responses showed that the objective of the discussion was well achieved, as each student's individual analysis of the topic was well disseminated and noticed. It is hoped that in this way there will be an increase in awareness and understanding of the subject that was worked on with them during the two weeks of activity.

In a personal analysis of the activity carried out, it is clear that issues such as the vulnerability of adolescents to early pregnancy are influenced by several factors, including access to economic resources, gender norms, family expectations and educational opportunities. Chacham et al., (2012) highlights the impact of socioeconomic inequalities and gender disparities on adolescents' ability to access sexual and reproductive health information and services. These barriers contribute to the perpetuation of poverty and social exclusion among young people.

The involvement of social institutions, including schools and the healthcare system, should also be taken into account when addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy and possible programs to address this issue. It is imperative that these programs cover not only the biological components, encompassing reproductive anatomy and physiology, but also the psychosocial elements, including promoting healthy relationships, understanding sexual consent, and making responsible decisions. As highlighted by Queiroz et al., (2017) sexual education programs have significant potential in reducing teenage pregnancy rates, providing young people with the information and skills necessary to make well-informed decisions about their reproductive well-being, and sexual.

The results of the conversation held on the last day demonstrated a positive understanding on the part of the students about early pregnancy and its main factors. During the discussion, participants demonstrated a deep understanding of the ramifications of teenage pregnancy, encompassing the physical, emotional and social challenges faced by teenagers and their families. Interaction in the group allowed for exploration and reflection on topics such as responsibility, sexual education and family planning, revealing a growing awareness of the importance of making informed decisions. This engagement suggests that activities like this have the potential to inform and raise awareness among young people about sexual health issues, helping to identify and prevent risks associated with



early pregnancy. The conversation circle provided a safe space for students to express their concerns and receive information, being essential to promote responsible behaviors and conscious decisions among young people.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results and analyzes obtained highlight the importance of providing adolescents with accurate information and adequate resources. The implementation of effective educational programs, based on evidence and adapted to the specific needs of young people, can help reduce risk factors associated with teenage pregnancy. It is essential that these initiatives are ongoing and involve not only schools, but also families and health systems, in order to create an environment that supports and promotes informed and responsible decision-making about sexual and reproductive health by adolescents.

The data collected is in line with the studies referenced. Although the studies mentioned cover the last 10 years, they appear to be timeless, since complex social phenomena require the evolution of certain concepts and social behaviors to be understood and modified. A relevant example is the theories of Trindade and Bruns (1999), which emphasize the influence of the family and school environment on adolescent behavior. These theories remain extremely applicable to the current context.

By integrating these findings with pertinent theoretical and practical paradigms, this study enriches understanding of the factors that influence teenage pregnancy. Evidence suggests that a multidimensional approach, which encompasses education, family support and public policies, is essential to mitigate the risks related to this phenomenon.

Therefore, the results of this research are crucial to guide future policies and practices in sexual education and youth health. They indicate the urgency of more effective strategies, adapted to the local and cultural realities of adolescents, contributing significantly to the progress of knowledge in this area. With robust empirical data, it is possible to develop and implement more effective



preventive programs against teenage pregnancy. Therefore, the conclusions of this study have the potential to inspire more targeted and effective actions, aimed at promoting the health and well-being of adolescents.

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