

Research has shown that by the age of 16 years, many adolescents are sexually active. Consequently many girls drop out of school due to pregnancy. Few of the girls seek medical attention during pregnancy and those who do, would normally do so later in gestation. Yet, pregnant adolescent girls are more likely to face hazards at childbirth than older women. Research has also shown that the girl's partners are mainly their age mates. It is clear that young people can and do make important decisions on matters pertaining to their own lives, and need information that concerns their welfare. This study sought to find out the information available to the adolescents on reproductive health matters prior to entering the teenage cycle. The study further sought to determine where adolescents got their information on reproductive health from and the impact this information had on their attitudes and perceptions on reproductive health issues.

This study was carried out in Nairobi. Data were collected through a descriptive survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and content analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from six different types of schools in Nairobi. A total of 285 students were randomly selected to fill the questionnaire and six FGDs were organized. The study targeted adolescents, 13-16 years who were in secondary school.

The findings from this research show that adolescents are exposed to information on areas of reproductive health both at school and at home. However, this information does not seem adequate for them in understanding their physical and emotional changes. On boy/girl relationships, the respondents saw these relationships as healthy and a phenomenon that comes naturally during adolescence. Clearly, the respondents did not approve of sexual relationships at their age and many feel that sex should only take place in marriage. The respondents viewed becoming pregnant as punitive enough in itself and further punishment like discontinued schooling, social and family ostracism should not be given to those who become pregnant. Mothers and Home Science teachers were the main source of information for the respondents on various aspects of reproductive health. However, the type of information each group offered was quite different. Teachers mentioned mainly by the boys offer information on the physical changes at puberty, the reproductive system and some information on STIs. Mother's discussions with their daughters are mainly on menstruation, what to do during menstruation and the consequences of engaging in pre-marital sex. The mass media, mainly books/magazines and TV also contributed in educating the respondents on almost all aspects of reproductive health.