

Current Health Event

Adolescent Pregnancy

Adolescent pregnancy is one of the main contributors to maternal and child mortality and to intergenerational cycles of poverty and ill health. Adolescent pregnancy (also called teenage pregnancy) is defined as the pregnancy of a woman under the age of 20. Statistical data on adolescent pregnancies are often segregated into two groups; pregnancies among women aged 10-14 and pregnancies among women aged 15-19, mainly due to biological and physiological differences between the two age groups.

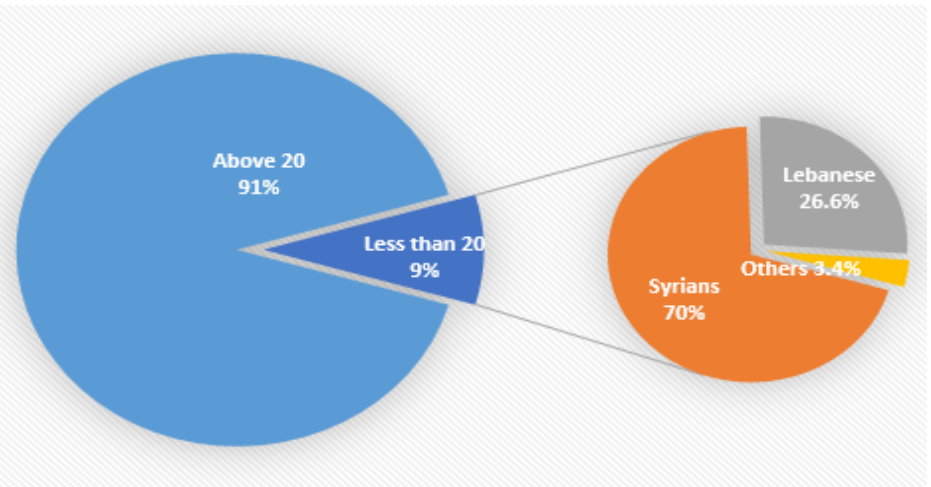
Editorial note:

Globally, the leading cause of death among girls aged between 15 to 19, are complications during pregnancy and delivery. In 2016, in developing regions of the world, it is estimated that 21 million young women 15 to 19 years old were pregnant and 777,000 girls aged less than 15 gave birth in the same year.

The literature indicates that at delivery, adolescent women are more at risk of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, placental tears, obstruction at the time of delivery, obstetric fistulae, and systemic infections, than women aged 20 to 24 years. Risks for newborns also increase with early childbearing, particularly pre-term deliveries, low birth weight, and severe neonatal conditions. Moreover, adolescent mothers usually have greater psychological, emotional, and social needs than other mothers.

In Lebanon, 9% of the hospital-based deliveries (11,196 deliveries) were the result of adolescent pregnancies in 2017. 10,958 deliveries were for women aged between 15-19 and 238 deliveries were among women aged below 15. 70% of the recorded adolescent deliveries were Syrians, 26.6% were Lebanese, 3.4% were of other nationalities (figure 1). Out of the 21 maternal deaths recorded in Lebanon in 2017, 6 (28.6%) were adolescents below 20 years of age.

Figure 1: Deliveries by nationality resulting from adolescent pregnancies (<20) in Lebanon in 2017



In 2017, in a survey conducted in Western Bekaa by UNFPA, 24% of the Syrian women aged between 15 and 17 in the sample were married, and more than 30% of the surveyed Syrian women aged between 20 and 24 were married before the age of 18. Observations from the field indicate that when Syrian adolescent women are coerced into a marriage or choose to marry and leave the households they are commonly driven by poverty, crowded tents or households, lack of education, and lack of employment opportunities.

In Lebanon, many nongovernmental organizations are teaming up to implement campaigns and outreach activities to raise awareness about the dangers of child marriage while engaging youth, parents and communities. Moreover, and in order to prohibit child marriage, women's rights organizations have been lobbying and strongly advocating for legislation that sets 18 as the national minimum legal age for marriage.

Offering youth-friendly health services, including reproductive health services, in primary healthcare centers (PHCs) to increase the use of contraception by adolescents is on the agenda of the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH). WHO supports the MOPH in developing national guidelines and in training healthcare provi-

ders working in PHCs on delivering quality reproductive health services and family planning counseling services.

WHO is globally committed to support countries in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals targets 3.1 and 3.7 associated with adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality. WHO is also invested in the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health, and is working in collaboration with partners to fulfil its objectives.

Notifiable Diseases in Lebanon [cumulative n° of cases among all Residents (among Syrians)] as of 5 July 2018

Disease	2017	2018	May 18	Jun 18
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0	0(0)	0 (0)	0(0)
AFP	77	45(17)	11(6)	3(1)
Measles	126	732(148)	227(24)	161 (18)
Mumps	235	64(25)	11(5)	4(1)
Pertussis	92	31(15)	5(0)	2(1)
Rabies	1	1(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	10	6(1)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	0	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep. B	321	133(9)	20(2)	19(1)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	460	124(13)	25(1)	16(5)
Cholera	0	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Hydatid cyst	18	2(1)	0(0)	0(0)
Typhoid fever	656	142(3)	23(0)	21(0)
Viral Hep. A	776	400(92)	45(8)	41(13)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	140	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Meningitis	366	213(43)	38(7)	51(7)
Viral Hep. C	130	54(4)	12(0)	9(0)