

## Evaluating the Efficacy of School Sexual and Reproductive Health Education in Preventing Teenage Pregnancies: A Case Study of a Selected Health Area during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2021

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### Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of School Sexual and Reproductive Health Education (SSRHE) in reducing teenage pregnancies in Egodauyana Medical Officer of Health, the area with the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Colombo Regional Director of Health Services area in 2021, amidst the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. This study involved the implementation of SSRHE programs in 12 high-risk schools. The target population consisted of students in grades 10 and above. In 2021, a total of 75 teenage mothers had registered in the area; 34 individuals (45.3%) belonged to Group 1, comprising teenage mothers attending school and residing in the area, while the remaining 41 individuals (54.7%) were classified under Group 2, encompassing nonresident teenage mothers. The age distribution revealed that 44 teenage mothers were aged 18–19 years, 28 were in the 16–17 age group, and three were under 16 years old. In 2022, registered teenage pregnancies decreased to 68. Within this cohort, 17 individuals (26.5%) were classified as belonging to Group 1, while 51 individuals (73.5%) were categorized under Group 2. The age distribution revealed that 48 teenage mothers were aged 18–19 years, 16 were in the 16–17 age group, and four were under 16 years old. There was a statistically significant reduction in teenage pregnancies within Group 1 when compared to 2021 ( $p = 0.014$ ). Conversely, Group 2 experienced a substantial increase ( $p = 0.000$ ) in teenage pregnancies. A study highlights the value of inclusive SSRHE programs in reducing teen pregnancies. However, additional support is necessary for nonresident teen mothers.

**Keywords:** *Sexual and reproductive health, Teenage pregnancies*