Abstract

RESEARCH PROJECT: The Effect of Requiring Parental Consent for Contraception on Adolescent Pregnancy Rates

STUDENT: Kalyn Haney

DEGREE: Masters of Science

COLLEGE: College of Applied Sciences and Technology

DATE: July 2010

The United States has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the world’s developed nations. Arguments persist about the outcomes of requiring parental notification for minors before obtaining contraceptives. Proponents of parental consent assert that pregnancy rates may drop because adolescents would talk to their parents about sexual activity. Opponents feel that teenage pregnancy rates would increase because teens would not talk to parents and therefore not receive contraception. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect on pregnancy rates of requiring parental consent for contraception for minors. This is a modified replication of Zavodny’s (2004) study with a comparative epidemiological design. The sample consists of women less than 18 years of age in one Midwestern county. A new policy will be implemented county-wide requiring parental consent before minors obtain contraception. Pregnancy rates will be followed for two years and compared to pregnancy rates for the previous two-year period. Findings of the study may add to what is known about predictors of adolescent pregnancy and may guide nurses who counsel adolescents about contraception and sexual activity.