

Low birth weight babies: socio-demographic and obstetric characteristics of adolescent mothers at Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi

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Abstract

Objectives: To compare some socio-demographic and obstetric factors between adolescent mothers (aged below 20 years) and older mothers of low birthweight (birthweight < 2000 gm) babies. **Design:** Cross sectional descriptive study. **Setting:** The Newborn Unit of the Kenyatta National Hospital. **Result:** Sixty nine adolescent mothers and 73 older mothers were studied. Adolescent mothers were more likely to be unmarried ($p = 0.0001$) have less formal education ($p < 0.0001$) be unemployed and be primigravida (76.5% compared to 36% of older mothers). Although the obstetric factors of antenatal clinic attendance, premature rupture of the membranes, pre-eclamptic toxemia, infections and interventronal delivery tended to be more frequent among the adolescent mothers, non of these differences were significant probably due to the small numbers of patients studied. **Conclusion:** This study does suggest mothers of very low birthweight babies tend to have unfavourable socio-demographic and obstetric factors like being single parents having less formal education, being unemployed and having obstetric risks for poor pregnancy outcome