

A comparative analysis of the use of maternal health services between teenagers and older mothers in sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Demographic and Health

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Abstract:

This paper uses Demographic and Health Surveys data from 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa to examine the use of maternal health services by teenagers. A comparison of maternal health care between teenagers and older women, based on bivariate analysis shows little variation in maternal health care by age. However, after controlling for the effect of background factors such as parity, premarital births, educational attainment and urban/rural residence in a multivariate analysis, there is evidence that teenagers have poorer maternal health care than older women with similar background characteristics. The results from multilevel logistic models applied to pooled data across countries show that teenagers are generally more likely to receive inadequate antenatal care and have non-professional deliveries. An examination of country-level variations shows significant differences in the levels of maternal health care across countries. However, there is no evidence of significant variations across countries in the observed patterns of maternal health care by maternal age. This suggests that the observed patterns by maternal age are generalizable across the sub-Saharan Africa region.