FACTORS INFLUENCING ADOLESCENT FERTILITY IN KENYA AND TANZANIA.

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ABSTRACT
Adolescent fertility is a major health concern because it is associated with higher morbidity and mortality for both the mother and child. Early childbearing shapes the mother and her child’s opportunities, their subsequent life chances for good or bad depending on the wealth status of the adolescent’s background. Despite decline in Total Fertility Rates in both Kenya and Tanzania, adolescent fertility still remains high. The analyses done were based on a sample of 1,767 adolescents from Kenya and 2,221 adolescents from Tanzania aged 15-19 years.

The data was obtained from Demographic and Health Surveys of 2008-2009 for Kenya and 2010 for Tanzania. Logistic regression model was fitted to identify social economic, socio-demographic and social cultural determinants of adolescent fertility. The major factors associated with adolescent fertility in Kenya were education, marital status, age, age at first intercourse, age at first marriage and use of contraceptives. On the other hand, the major factors associated with adolescent fertility in Tanzania were age, age at first marriage, education, marital status, use of contraceptives and work status. All these factors were similar for both countries except work status and age at first intercourse which showed association in Tanzania and Kenya respectively.

The major policy implications for this study are that the marriage act 1971 which has set age at first marriage as 14 years in Tanzania should be reviewed to raise age at first marriage and the children act 2000 in Kenya which outlaws underage marriage should be enforced. Subsidized free and universal primary education should be offered in both countries to motivate girls to remain in school especially those who are from poor background. Finally, qualitative study should be carried out to provide such information and questions that cannot be answered using quantitative data.