Teenage Pregnancy Essay, Research Paper

Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is normally something unexpected and something that could ruin a young woman?s life. There is a continuing increase in teenage pregnancy. This increase is a major concern because teenage mothers and their babies? face more risks to their health. The birth rate for young teens (age 15 to 17) is steadily rising. Between 1986 and 1991, the rate increased by 27 percent (from a rate of 30.5to a rate of 38.7 per 1,000 women). In 1991, nearly 4 in 100 girls ages 15 to 17 had a baby. About 1 million teenagers become pregnant each year, and more than 530,000 give birth. Nearly 13% of all U.S. births in 1991 were to teens. Teens often have poor eating habits, and may smoke, drink alcohol and take drugs, increasing the risk that their babies will be born with health problems or miscarriages. A teenage mother is also more at risk of pregnancy complications such as premature or prolonged labor, anemia and high blood pressure. These risks are even greater for teens who are less than 15 years old.

Even in a country as developed and advanced as the U.S.A. our teenage birth rate exceeds most other developed countries. Teen mothers are also least likely, of the age groups, to get support or help from their parents. In 1991, 11 percent of teen mothers got no support or parental care from their parents. This shows that the parents of teen mothers often don?t care about their teenagers getting pregnant and don?t want anything to do with them.

Three million teens are affected by sexually transmitted diseases annually, out of the 12 million cases reported. These include chlamydeous (which can cause sterility), syphilis (which can cause blindness, death, and death to the infant) and AIDS, which is fatal to the mother and can infect the infant although in some cases AIDS was not transmitted to the baby.

A baby born to a teenage mother is more at risk than a baby born to an older mother. Nine percent of teenage girls have low-birth weight babies (under 5.5 lbs.), compared to 7 percent of all mothers nationally. There are many different risks when an under aged, under prepared woman brings a new life into this world. Low-birthweight babies may have organs that are not fully developed. This can lead to lung problems such as respiratory distress syndrome, or bleeding in the brain. Low-birthweight babies are 40 times more likely to die in their first month of life than normal-weight babies.

Life is often difficult for a teenage mother and her child. One in three teen mothers drops out of high school. With her education cut short, a teenage mother may lack job skills, making it hard for her to find and keep a job. A teenage mother may become financially dependent on her family or on welfare. Teens may not have developed good parenting skills, or have social-support systems to help them deal with the stress of raising an infant. Therefore, like you see on the news so many times, teen mothers often do drastic things to themselves and to her baby. Some may commit suicide, murder their babies, ignore them and let them starve or dehydrate to death. It is probably the saddest aspect of teenage pregnancy and with the teenage pregnancy rate rising every year, it isn?t going to stop any time soon.