

Mapping of Risks and Opportunities for Adolescents Girls' Sexual and Reproductive Health in Peri-Urban Setting in Mwanza, Tanzania

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Abstract : In sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls living in urban and periurban settings are among the groups at increased risk of getting sexually transmitted infections. One of the challenges to improve uptake of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services among adolescents is linked to little appreciation about their vulnerability and the knowledge on availability of the SRH services. Objective: This study assesses adolescents' perceptions on risks for SRH problems and the availability of services to prevent against SRH problems. Methodology: The study was conducted in March 2011 in Mwanza region, Tanzania. Data collection techniques included 18 Participatory Group Discussions and 17 In-depth Interviews with adolescents and young mothers aged 15-20 years. Results: Adolescents indicated that risk places included their homes, bushes, commercial centers, roadsides as well as school settings. Risk for having unprotected sex varied depending on where you are, and the time of the day. For example, collection of firewood in the bushes or water from the wells exposed girls to men who forced or lured them to have sex. The girls reported to encounter motorcyclists who offered the ride in exchange for sex. Girls also knew myriads places to seek SRH services, including public and private clinics, drug shops and traditional healers. Despite being aware of risky environment, and places to seek the services, access to SRH services were limited due to the stigma and negative attitude of community regarding adolescents' utilization of SRH services. Conclusion: Adolescents are exposed to various risky environments, yet due to social stigma they have difficult to access the available SRH services.

Keywords : adolescent girls, sexual and reproductive health, AIDS, risk, opportunities, interventions, sub Saharan africa

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