

Reviewer's report

Title: Reproductive Outcomes in Adolescents Who Had a Previous Birth or an Induced Abortion Compared to Adolescents' First Pregnancies: A retrospective cohort study.

Version: 1 **Date:** 1 November 2007

Reviewer: Lorraine Klerman

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions

It appears that this is a cross-sectional study, i.e., the authors are comparing all nulliparous adolescents in their sample with all those who had a previous birth and all those with a history of abortion. As I stated in my article on this subject, this type of study needs to be longitudinal if one wants to suggest causality. Adolescents who have a birth following a prior birth or an abortion are different in many ways from those who have a first birth with no previous pregnancies, i.e., there is selection into having a second birth while still an adolescent. The authors have controlled for only four of the possible factors (nationality, partner status, smoking, and adequacy of prenatal care) that might differentiate these groups. There are many other possible factors that might influence whether the adolescent has a second pregnancy, including age, drug use, and poverty. The authors have found relatively few effects of a prior pregnancy: perinatal and neonatal mortality (which overlap) for previous births; or a history of abortions for very low birthweight. It is possible that even these findings might be eliminated if the study was longitudinal, i.e., adolescents who had a first pregnancy ending in a live or still birth or an abortion were followed into their second pregnancy. The authors should discuss this limitation more fully.

Minor Essential Revisions

The numbers are correct in the abstract and on page 9, but not on page 7. There were 7,845 nulliparous adolescents (13-18), 801 with a previous birth, and 211 with a previous induced abortion. Page 7 reads as if the 801 and 211 were included in the 7,845.

Some of the data on teen pregnancies in the first two paragraphs is old and more recent numbers are available. Also for the OECD data no date is given.

Discretionary Revisions

The term “repeat pregnancy” is very pejorative and is used only with teenagers. “Subsequent births” is a better term and one that can be applied to older women as well as teenagers.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.