

Repeat pregnancies among UK teenagers on the increase

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(PhysOrg.com) -- An expert in health services at The University of Nottingham is calling for urgent action to improve contraceptive advice and services to reduce the growing number of repeat teenage pregnancies in the United Kingdom.

Using national abortion figures for England and Wales from 1991 to 2007, provided by the Office of National Statistics and Department of Health, researchers at Nottingham found that the number of women under 20 presenting for repeat abortions has risen steadily over the last 15 years.

Jacqueline Collier, a professor of Health Services Research in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy said: “Current routine contraceptive advice and services are failing to prevent repeat pregnancies to increasing numbers of young women and it may be necessary to develop targeted services to support and guide teenagers after a first abortion. These services would complement the introduction of the United Kingdom's Family Nurse Partnership scheme, which is currently being implemented to support and guide vulnerable first-time young mothers.”

The United Kingdom is recognised as having the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in western Europe, and this research has shown that termination following a previous pregnancy is on the increase.

That the vast majority of births to teenage mothers are registered outside

marriage created difficulties when trying to identify the proportion of teenage mothers who are having children subsequent to their first. However, researchers used information regarding previous births and previous abortions collected from teenagers presenting for termination of pregnancy. The national abortion figures represent one of the few ways of investigating, on a national scale, whether there is an increase in the number of young women presenting with a repeat pregnancy before the age of 20 in the UK.

The research, published this month in the international journal *Contraception*, analysed data for England and Wales in order to explore whether there are changes in the patterns of repeat teenage pregnancies.

Provided by University of Nottingham

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