

Teenage Fathers Often Born to Teenage Fathers, Study Finds

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Sons of adolescent fathers are nearly twice as likely to perpetuate the cycle of young parenthood and become teenage dads themselves, a new study by the Yale School of Public Health has found.

Previous studies have documented the intergenerational cycle of adolescent [motherhood](#) (in which the daughters of adolescent mothers are more likely to become teenage mothers), but this is believed to be the first research that confirms a similar relationship between teenage dads and their sons.

The Yale research team, led by YSPH doctoral candidate Heather Sipsma, analyzed data from 1,496 young males who were 19 years old or younger and found that sons of adolescent fathers were 1.8 times more likely to eventually become adolescent fathers than were the sons of older men. This intergenerational effect remained significant even after controlling for a number of related risk factors including the influence of having an adolescent mother.

“We often neglect the importance of men in reproductive and maternal-child health. We need to recognize that men play a significant role in the health and well being of families and children,” said senior author Trace Kershaw, associate professor in the division of Chronic Disease Epidemiology.

Teenage parenthood is associated with a range of problems for both the young parents and their [offspring](#). Adolescent fathers typically have less

[educational achievement](#) and poorer earning potential than their peers who delay parenthood. There is also evidence of poor parental attachment and low levels of parental support. The children of such parents are often raised in low-income homes and they are at higher risk for neglect and abuse.

“The mechanism of this intergenerational cycle remains unclear. However, research suggests that parents are a major factor in shaping adolescent attitudes and often communicate their values and expectations through their behavior,” Sipsma said. Previous studies have found that youths who have more involved fathers are less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior.

Provided by Yale University

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