

Teenage pregnancy is not a racial issue

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While researchers have long set to determine if there is a tie between race and teenage pregnancy, according to a new study, equating black teenagers with the problem of teenage pregnancy is a misrepresentation of today's reality. This new study is detailed in the article, "Black Teenage Pregnancy: A Dynamic Social Problem," published in *SAGE Open*.

Researchers Lorette I. Winters and Paul C. Winters studied data from 1,580 teenage girls and found that while black teens are about twice as likely as white teens to ever be pregnant, pregnancy rates for black minors are in reality declining while rates for minor whites, although sporadic, have increased and from 2005-2006 and even exceeded those of poor minor blacks.

"Apparently, teen pregnancy is becoming more of a problem for affluent and poor white minors of late compared with their black counterparts as reflected in their recent rates," wrote the authors.

Researchers also analyzed the relationship between the economy, race, and teenage pregnancy and found that poor economic conditions are a true marker of disparity between black and white pregnant teens. For example, in 2003-2004, when unemployment rates were high, black [teenagers](#) were seven times more likely to have ever been pregnant than white teenagers. Conversely, in better economies, when unemployment rates are low, there is almost no difference between reported teenage pregnancies for black and white teenagers.

The authors wrote, "In good economies when there are greater job opportunities, black teens may choose education, work, or career over motherhood."

Winters and Winters utilized data gathered from 1999 to 2006 by the National Center for Health Statistics of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This data was taken from in-home interviews as well as standardized physical examinations and laboratory studies of 1,580 black and white females ages 15 to 19.

The study reported other noteworthy information about [teenage pregnancy](#) such as the fact that the pregnancy rate was found to be significantly higher for teens living in households with a female head of household compared with those with a male head of household and that the overall pregnancy rate has been dropping since 2000 with the exception of a slight increase in 2005-2006. Additionally, the researchers found that [black](#) teenagers and teenagers from lower-income homes have a greater likelihood of reporting having ever been pregnant than [white](#) teenagers or teenagers who come from higher-income homes.

More information: The article "Black Teenage Pregnancy: A Dynamic Social Problem" published in *SAGE Open*, is available free at: sgo.sagepub.com/content/early/.../436563.full.pdf+html

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