

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health priorities identified

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Quality sexual and reproductive health care is an essential component of public health. However, there are insufficient evidence-based policies related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health in low- and middle-income countries. In an effort to address the research gap, faculty from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health led a project to identify research priorities for adolescent sexual and reproductive health in these countries. The results, which are based on input from nearly 300 experts and highlight key focus areas, are featured in the January issue of the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.

"Despite the commitment of many governments to address the health problems commonly affecting adolescents, little evidence has been generated on whether or not such commitments have made a difference," said Michelle Hindin, PhD, lead author of the study and an associate professor with the Bloomberg School's Department of Population, Family and [Reproductive Health](#).

To conduct the study, Hindin and colleagues modified the priority-setting method of the [Child Health](#) and Nutrition Research Initiative to solicit input from nearly 300 experts—researchers, health program managers and donors representing a range of expertise in adolescent sexual and reproductive health from all [developing country](#) regions. During a rigorous three-phase process, the team asked the experts to rank health outcome areas in order of importance, formulate research questions within each area and rank the formulated questions in order of priority.

"The top-ranking research questions suggest a widespread impression that the definition of the problems affecting adolescents, and the delivery and assessment of specific interventions need to be improved. Many of the top-ranking questions suggest that interest has shifted away from basic prevalence questions and towards questions dealing with the scale-up of existing interventions and the development of new ones," suggest the authors.

"Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative methods can be used by donors and health program managers to prioritize research on adolescent sexual reproductive health. The results of this exercise can be used as a tool to help policymakers and donors to target priority areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health for research funding. Although the adolescent population is leveling off in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa, evidence-based policies and programs are needed to address this group's [sexual and reproductive health](#) needs," adds Hindin.

More information: "Setting research priorities for adolescent sexual and reproductive health in low-and middle-income countries" was written by Michelle J. Hindin, Charlotte Sigurdson Christiansen and B. Jane Ferguson.

Provided by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

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