Social normative and social network factors associated with adolescent birth: a cross-sectional study of 176 villages in rural Honduras

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For comparison:
Denmark 4
China 7
USA 21
Adolescent motherhood: high normative and social control

India, Pakistan, Niger, Ethiopia
Adolescent motherhood: low normative and social control

Latin America, Cameroon, United States
Adolescent motherhood: strong social control

Social norms, family, and community stability

Internal and external social control
Adolescent motherhood: weak social control

social norms, family and community stability

internal and external social control
Rural Copan, Honduras

176 villages
Complete village census and survey

~24,000 participants
Full network data
Reproductive health
Social networks

- Mother
- Father
- Sibling
- Partner
- Provider
- Closest friend
- Personal private
- Free time
- Health advice give
- Health advice get
- Money lend
- Money borrow
- Town leaders
Unit of analysis: girls/women <21 N=2990
Outcome: gave birth before age 20, 31%
Attitude: optimal age for first birth

Egos

Alters
Norms: community supports adolescent birth: injunctive norms proximal
Actual practice: had an adolescent birth: descriptive norms proximal

Egos

OUTCOME

Alters
Village level aggregate norms: community supports adolescent birth: injunctive norms distal
Village level aggregate: women who have had an adolescent birth: descriptive norms distal
Girls attitudes and alters attitudes towards optimal age at first birth are predictive.
Girls norms and alters norms on community approval of adolescent birth predictive.
Alter’s adolescent birth is predictive

Egos

Alters
Village level aggregate norms: community supports adolescent birth predictive
Controlling for community aggregate, alter norms lose significance

Egos

Alters
Village level aggregate: women who have had an adolescent birth predictive
Controlling for village aggregate, alters adolescent birth is still predictive.
The association between alters adolescent birth and a girl is strong across many relationships.
% increase in girls AB conditional on alter’s
Mean age of girl’s alters

Mean alter age

- Health Adv Give
- Borrow $
- Personal Private
- Free Time
- Sibling
- Close Friend
- Partner
- Provider
- Health Adv Get
- Lend $
- Leaders
- Father
- Mother
% increase in girls AB conditional on alter’s
Conclusions

• In cases of low social control, descriptive norms play a big role
• Girls are more likely to have had an adolescent birth in communities where people believe the community is supportive
• Girls are more likely to have had an adolescent birth in communities where it is more common
• A girl is far more likely to have had an adolescent birth if people in her proximal network have, while perceived norms in the proximal network seem to be less salient
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