

## **IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL GRANT AND TEENAGE FERTILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Several studies have drawn attention to the negative socio-economic, demographic, health, biological and psychological consequences of teenage pregnancy. The demographic and health consequences include high levels of maternal and child mortality, toxæmia, increased number of stillbirths and premature and low-birth-weight infants due to underlying biological risk inherent in young maternal age. Prolonged labour, iron deficiency and defective infants have also been cited as health consequences of teenage pregnancy. However, some researchers argue that pregnant teens do not constitute a high-risk group if good prenatal care is provided.

Some of the negative social consequences of teenage pregnancy that have been noted by several studies include lower educational attainment, as the teenage mother often discontinue her education, increased parity, as the teenage mother has another child quickly, higher divorce rate, as teenage marriages break up faster than other marriages, especially if the bride was pregnant at the time of marriage, lower income, increased poverty and dependency.

As part of its poverty alleviation programme, the South African Government offers child support grant to non-income and low-income earners who are single parents. The current value of the child support grant is R260 per month (approximately, US\$ 38 per month) and the age limit of children for whom parents can receive the child support grant is 17 years. The impact of the child support grant on fertility in South Africa has aroused interest in the last couple of years and sparked debate about the unintended consequence of the child support grant: increase in teenage fertility due to the child support grant. Despite this debate, no empirical evidence has been produced to establish that the child support grant increases teenage fertility in South Africa.

This study seeks to answer the question: is there a relationship between social grant and teenage fertility in South Africa. The source of data for this study is Statistics South Africa's 2007 community survey. The sample size for the survey comprised 947 331 individuals from 250 348 households. The analysis of the data in this study would include logistic regression to determine whether receiving child support grant significantly increases the odds of teenage fertility if other variables remained constant. Among the explanatory factors that would be controlled are education of teenage mothers, survival status of mother, survival status of father, household income, place of residence (rural or urban). It is expected that the results of this study would shed light on the debate regarding the relationship of the child support grant and teenage pregnancy in South Africa.