

Adolescent pregnancy in Bangladesh

October 11 has been declared as the International Day of the Girl Child to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

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Dit is de omschrijving

Asm Shahabuddin, our PhD student from Bangladesh, Predoc Researcher and Trans Global Health Doctoral Fellow, researches adolescent pregnancy and girls' access to maternal health services in Bangladesh - a problem that affects many girls all across the globe.

"Despite substantial progress in reducing maternal mortality in the past two decades, the issue of adolescent (aged 10-19 years) pregnancy is still quite prevalent in Bangladesh. Although the legal age of marriage in Bangladesh for girls is 18 years, about 66% of the women get married before that age," Shahab.

"This huge proportion of child marriage contributes to the high rates of pregnancies among adolescent girls. Most recent (2014) Bangladesh DHS data shows that among adolescent girls, about 20% do not receive any antenatal care while 58% of the deliveries take place at home without assistance from skilled attendants.

"My PhD research focuses on the issue of adolescent pregnancy and the reasons behind the low utilisation rate of skilled maternal health services by married adolescent girls in Bangladesh. One of the most important results is that, in case of adolescent girls, decisions regarding their access to health care and other services are mainly made either by their husbands, their mothers-in-law or another senior member in the family. Pregnancy and maternal health are often considered as a 'women only' issue, concerning which men have no responsibilities. Yet, the decision of whether or not a woman delivers at a health facility or at home is her husband's decision.

"Gender roles, which are socially constructed attitudes that define appropriate behaviors and rights for men and women, greatly influence adolescent girls' access to reproductive health services in Bangladesh, especially in rural, more traditional settings. In order to combat adolescent pregnancy and to ensure the use of skilled maternal health services among adolescent girls, active participation of all societal actors including family members, neighbours and local stakeholders is necessary. Maternal health-related programmes should be designed in a way that husbands and mother-in-laws are involved in the health interventions," concluded Shahab.

Follow the links below to access a few articles of Shahab's PhD research on adolescent pregnancy:

[What Influences Adolescent Girls' Decision-Making Regarding Contraceptive Methods Use and Childbearing?](#)

[Utilization of maternal health services among adolescent women in Bangladesh](#)

[Determinants and trends in health facility-based deliveries and caesarean sections among married adolescent girls in Bangladesh](#)