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ABSTRACT

Objective: To understand the lived experience of adolescent mothers with regard to their pregnancy and childbirth.

Study design and methods: Phenomenological study of 7 adolescent mothers.

Results: Themes that emerged from the conversation with the mothers were (a) finding encouragement, (b) the downside of my childbirth experience, (c) point of no return, and (d) hope for the time to come. The participants found encouragement from their child from their immediate family, from the father of their baby for the married and those who are in committed relationship, from life's changes and from themselves. The negative aspect of their childbirth experience includes having to stop their studies, strained relationship with their own fathers and the father of the child for the three single adolescent mothers. Difficulties arise from burden of childcare, childcare during illness, breastfeeding and financial dependency. Loss of my youth where the participants were into maturity as they perform adult roles and feeling sort were the other categories under the theme downside of my experience. A recollection of the past is described in the theme point of no return. Family problems, bad influence and wrong choices were the precursors to unintended pregnancy. Fears of the consequences of pregnancy and thoughts of abortion demonstrated that the pregnancies were unintended. Emotions felt during labor and delivery were pain, fear, loss of patience and relief. The health workers comments, instructions and actions made an impact on the labor and delivery experiences of the adolescent mothers. The theme hopes for the time that is to achieve all that they hope for their child and their own selves.

Clinical implications: Medical and nursing interventions should address all section in the framework. Interventions to prevent adolescent pregnancy should be of utmost importance. However, when pregnancy occurs the adolescent should be helped from pregnancy onwards. Need of support person, efforts to lessen the pain and attempts to address the fears of the adolescent during labor and delivery can greatly improve her childbirth experience. Adolescent mothers can benefit from the services rendered by health workers when they display a more caring attitude that includes providing nonjudgmental care despite the adolescent's lifestyle choices, being available and maintaining a presence for constant support and allowing the adolescent to be part of the decision-making process when possible.

Keywords: Adolescent pregnancy, Childbirth experience, Phenomenology,