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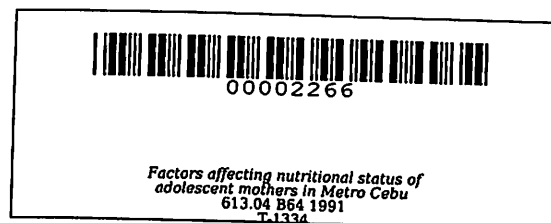
FACTORS AFFECTING NUTRITIONAL STATUS
OF ADOLESCENT MOTHERS
IN METRO CEBU

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ABSTRACT

JUDITH RAFAELITA B. BORJA, University of the Philippines at Los Baños, June 1991. Factors Affecting Nutritional Status of Adolescent Mothers in Metro Cebu.

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This study was designed to generate baseline information on the primiparous adolescent mother from Metro Cebu. The main concern was to find out how the simultaneous nutrient demands imposed by pregnancy and her own physical growth affect maternal nutritional status. The study covered from pregnancy to one year postpartum.

Characteristics of the adolescent mothers were compared with older primiparous mothers aged 20 to 25 years old. Maternal characteristics at pregnancy were analyzed for possible influences on maternal nutritional status at pregnancy and on pregnancy outcome. Likewise, the influences of maternal characteristics, nutritional status at pregnancy and infant feeding practice on postpartum nutritional status were determined.

Findings revealed that, although the adolescent mothers were less educated, less conscientious with their health during pregnancy, had lower energy adequacy ratios and were gynecologically immature compared with the adult mother, no significant difference in nutritional status was found between both groups. There was no

indication of stunting nor wasting among the adolescent mothers for the entire study period. Although infants of adolescent mothers weighed significantly lower than those of the adult mothers mean birth weights were still above the low birth weight cut-off point of 2500 grams. Despite their marginal energy intakes, the young mothers seemed to have sustained their growth as well as that of the fetus. After delivery, the adolescent mothers continued to have optimal nutritional status even among those who fully breastfed their infants for the first 6 months.

Regression analysis showed that at pregnancy, variations in gynecological age and alcohol consumption account for the variability in percentage standard weight-for-height ($R^2 = .03$, $p < 0.05$) and arm muscle area ($R^2 = .04$, $p < 0.01$) at pregnancy. Number of years in school accounted for the variability in arm fat area ($R^2 = .02$, $p < 0.05$). In terms of pregnancy outcome, number of years in school and percentage standard weight-for-height at pregnancy had significant influences on birth weight ($R^2 = .07$, $p < 0.01$).

At six months postpartum, correlation analysis identified household size, prenatal care and vitamin supplementation at pregnancy and nutritional status at pregnancy as the factors significantly associated with maternal nutritional status.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Objectives of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Limitations of the Study	7
Conceptual Framework	8
Operational Definitions	10
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	19
Problems with Adolescent Pregnancy Studies	20
Characteristics of Adolescent Mothers	21
Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics	21
Health Practices During Pregnancy	24
Biological Characteristics	27
Dietary Habits	31
Adolescent Anthropometry	34
Weight	34
Height	35
Muscle and Fat Area	36
Pregnancy Outcome	37
Birth Weight	37
Gestational Age	39
Ponderal Index	39
Infant Feeding Practices among Adolescents	40
Nutrient Utilization During Lactation	41
METHODOLOGY	42
Data Source	42
Locale of the Study	42
Sampling	43

	<u>Page</u>
Collection of Data and Research Instruments	43
Present Study	45
Unit of Analysis	45
Selection of Adolescent and Comparison Groups	45
Data Analysis	49
Statistical Analysis	49
Food Intake Analysis	50
Maternal Nutritional Status Assessment	50
Identification of Nutritionally-at-Risk Adolescent Mothers	51
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	53
Pregnancy and Parturition Period	53
Characteristics of the Adolescent Mothers	53
Comparison Between Adolescent Mothers and Adult Mothers	62
Factors Affecting Maternal Nutritional Status at Pregnancy among Adolescent Mothers	70
Predicting Nutritional Status at Pregnancy	74
Factors Affecting Pregnancy Outcome	77
Predicting Pregnancy Outcome	78
Nutritionally-At-Risk Pregnant Adolescents	79
Postpartum Period	86
Two Months Postpartum	88
Six Months Postpartum	92
Factors Affecting Maternal Nutritional Status at Six Months Postpartum	97
Changes in Anthropometry Over Time	100
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	111
RECOMMENDATIONS	118
LITERATURE CITED	120
APPENDICES	126

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Frequency distribution of mothers in the Metro Cebu Child Health and Survival Study by age and parity	46
2 Frequency distribution of mothers by age and stratum	47
3 Frequency distribution of mothers by background characteristics	54
4 Anthropometric measurements of mothers at pregnancy	59
5 Pregnancy outcome among adolescent and comparison groups	61
6 Gestational age among infants of adolescent mothers controlling for gynecological age	66
7 Gestational age and ponderal index controlling for sex of infant	68
8 Birth weight controlling for gestational age	69
9 Background characteristics of nutritionally-at-risk adolescent mothers during pregnancy	81
10 Anthropometric measurements of nutritionally-at-risk adolescent mothers during pregnancy	84
11 Pregnancy outcome among nutritionally-at-risk adolescent mothers during pregnancy	85
12 Frequency distribution of mothers by reproductive behavior at one year postpartum	87
13 Frequency distribution of mothers by infant feeding practice at two months postpartum	88
14 Background characteristics of adolescent mothers by infant feeding practice at two months postpartum	90

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
15	Anthropometric measurements of adolescent mothers by infant feeding practice at two months postpartum	93
16	Frequency distribution of mothers by infant feeding practice at six months postpartum	94
17	Background characteristics of adolescent mothers by infant feeding practice at six months postpartum	95
18	Anthropometric measurements of adolescent mothers by infant feeding practice at six months postpartum	98

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Conceptual model on factors affecting maternal nutritional status in adolescent pregnancy	11
2A Changes in weight by age group throughout study period	101
2B Changes in weight-for-height by age group throughout study period	102
2C Changes in arm muscle area by age group throughout study period	103
2D Changes in arm fat area by age group throughout study period	104
3A Changes in weight by infant feeding practice throughout study period	106
3B Changes in weight-for-height by infant feeding practice throughout study period	107
3C Changes in arm muscle area by infant feeding practice throughout study period	108
3D Changes in arm fat area by infant feeding practice throughout study period	109
4 Significant associations between maternal characteristics, nutritional status at pregnancy and pregnancy outcome among adolescent mothers	114
5 Significant associations between maternal characteristics, nutritional status at pregnancy and postpartum nutritional status among adolescent mothers	116

APPENDIX

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Page</u>
A Quality control and data handling issues	126

LIST OF APPENDIX TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Height-for-age standards for 14-18 year old Filipino females	129
2 Modified reference weight-for-height table by month of pregnancy	130
3 Weight-for-height standard mean values for Filipino females (25 to 65 years)	131
4 Pregnancy outcome among adolescent mothers controlling for gynecological age	133
5 Birth weight and ponderal index among infants of adolescent mothers controlling for gestational age and gynecological age	134
6 Pregnancy outcome for all mothers controlling for sex of infant	135
7 Pregnancy outcome for all mothers controlling for gestational age	136
8 Comparison of pregnancy outcome between infants of adult group and gynecologically mature adolescents	137
9 Significant associations among independent variables and dependent variables at pregnancy	138
10 Significant associations among independent variables and dependent variables at parturition	139
11 Significant associations among independent and dependent variables at postpartum period	141

INTRODUCTION

In the area of health and nutrition, the adolescents have failed to capture as much attention as the infants and preschoolers. Unlike the young children, adolescents are thought of as being less vulnerable since they are older and more capable of taking care of themselves. Besides, their mortality and morbidity rates are not as high.

What is often overlooked and less emphasized is the fact that adolescence is a critical point in man's life. It is the time when velocity of growth is most rapid (Heald, 1975) and this active phase makes the adolescents no less vulnerable than the other age groups.

Through the years, major developments concerning adolescents have emerged. Among these is an issue deserving merit for more serious attention to female adolescents: the increasing adolescent fertility.

The marked global trend towards urbanization has ushered the shifting of the traditional to the modern. Contemporary lifestyles have caused the family to slowly lose its influence on the young especially with the increase in nuclear households (WHO, 1975). Adolescents today lead less socially restricted lifestyles and are faced with more challenges that contribute to the hastening of their social maturation. With an expanded milieu for social interaction and a barrage of sexually-oriented influences like the media, the adolescent today has been made more aware of his/her sexuality. Without proper value formation and guidance, more and more adolescents may be led to indulge in early sexual activity. In a conservative