



Original article

Long-Term Consequences of Adolescent Parenthood Among African-American Urban Youth: A Propensity Score Matching Approach

Luciana C. Assini-Meytin, M.S. ^{*}, and Kerry M. Green, Ph.D.*Department of Behavioral and Community Health, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland**Article history:* Received August 13, 2014; Accepted January 9, 2015*Keywords:* Teenage pregnancy; Socioeconomic consequences; Longitudinal study; Teen mothers; Teen fathers

A B S T R A C T

Purpose: The aim of this study was to improve understanding of long-term socioeconomic consequences of teen parenting for men and women.**Methods:** Analysis is based on the Woodlawn Study, a longitudinal study of an African-American cohort from a socially disadvantaged community in Chicago; data were collected at childhood (N = 1,242), adolescence (N = 705), young adulthood (age 32 years, N = 952), and midlife (age 42 years, N = 833). This analysis focused on the 1,050 individuals with data on teen parenting. We used propensity score matching to account for differences in background characteristics between teenage parents and their peers and used multiple imputation to account for differential attrition.**Results:** The regression models after propensity score matching showed that at the age of 32 years, in comparison to nonteen mothers, teenage mothers were more likely to be unemployed, live in poverty, depend on welfare, and have earned a GED or completed high school compared to finishing college. At the age of 32 years, teen fathers were more likely to be without a job than nonteen fathers. At the age of 42 years, the effect of teen parenting for women remained statistically significant for education and income. There were no significant associations between teen parenting and outcomes for men at the age of 42 years.**Conclusions:** Socioeconomic consequences of teenage parenting among African-Americans from disadvantaged background seem to be primarily concentrated in women and persist throughout adulthood. In addition to promoting the delay of parenting after the teenage years, it is critical to provide programs at early stages in the life course to mitigate the negative socioeconomic consequences of teenage motherhood as effects for women are broad.

© 2015 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine. All rights reserved.

IMPLICATIONS AND
CONTRIBUTION

For women in particular, parenting at an early age can perpetuate socioeconomic disadvantages experienced in childhood. Programs to prevent teenage pregnancy and support young mothers and families are critical to helping young women achieve better educational, employment, and economic outcomes throughout their lives.

Although teen pregnancy rates in the United States have decreased 51% from 1990 to 2010 [1], teenage parenthood remains a major public health concern, particularly among youth from disadvantaged backgrounds [2]. Although the short-term socioeconomic consequences of teen motherhood are well

Conflicts of Interest: This research was supported by National Institute on Drug Abuse Grant R01DA026863 (to K.M.G., Principal Investigator).

^{*} Address correspondence to: Luciana C. Assini-Meytin, M.S., Department of Behavioral and Community Health, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, SPH Building, Valley Drive, Room 2387, College Park, MD 20742.

E-mail address: luassini@umd.edu (L.C. Assini-Meytin).

examined, studies rarely have compared effects for men and women [3–5] nor have examined consequences extending into midlife [4,6,7] to understand long-term effects.

Previous work has established early life differences between teenage parents and nonteenage parents. Compared to those who postpone childbearing, teenage mothers are more likely to come from families with low income and low educational attainment [6,8], to live in a household with none or one biological parent [8], and to be raised by a single mom [6] who was a teenage mother herself [9]. With regard to adolescent fathers, they are more likely to use illicit drugs and be exposed to family

violence in childhood [10] and to have prior grade failure, high aggression, and low academic skills [11].

Although studies have consistently shown associations between teenage parenting and negative outcomes [9,12,13], risk factors for teenage pregnancy overlap with risk factors for reduced life opportunities, which makes it difficult to tease out consequences from selection effects. Cumulative disadvantage theory proposes that individuals' lives interact with structural realities that shape their trajectories over time [14]. In the context of socioeconomically disadvantaged teenagers, early parenting is thought to function as a significant major life event that perpetuates trajectories of disadvantage [15,16]. Thus, compared to their peers, teenage parents from disadvantaged backgrounds have even fewer opportunities and greater stress and barrier that make it difficult to achieve socioeconomic success over the life course [17].

In line with this perspective, studies controlling for teen pregnancy risk factors found that early childbearing accounts only partially for the disadvantaged outcomes that teenage mothers face later in life [5,12,18], generally finding the strength of association is reduced after adjusting for selection factors [4,5,7,19]. After taking confounders into account, some studies have found persistent socioeconomic differences between teenage parents and nonteen parents by young adulthood. For example, teenage mothers achieve lower educational attainment [3,5,7], are less likely to be employed [3,19], and more likely to depend on welfare [4,6] compared to nonteenage mothers in models adjusting for earlier disadvantage. As most studies on consequences of teenage parenting have examined the socioeconomic consequences of teenage motherhood in the early to mid-20s only, it is less known whether these consequences persist into the thirties and forties.

Compared to teenage mothers, fewer studies have examined the socioeconomic consequences of parenting for teenage fathers. In a study of teenage fathers conducted in United Kingdom, researchers found evidence that selection factors partially explained negative consequences [20]. Results show that by the age of 30 years, teenage fathers are more likely to use subsidized housing, receive government benefits, and report poorer mental health than older fathers or childless men [20]. Similarly, Nock [21] found that unmarried teenage fathers completed less education and were less likely to work year round by their early to mid-30s than those of older unmarried fathers. In contrast, there is also some limited evidence of positive effects in the short-term for fathers. Fletcher and Wolfe [22] report that teen fathers were more likely to have full-time employment and be in the military by the age of 22 years than those of nonteen fathers, although no effects were found for income or wages. Further analysis is necessary to explore the role of selection factors, socioeconomic consequences extending into midlife and any potential positive effects of teenage fatherhood.

Present study and hypotheses

The aim of this study is to identify long-term socioeconomic consequences of teenage parenthood for women and for men. Although most studies have focused on short-term outcomes (e.g., into the early 20s) [4,6,7], this study examines socioeconomic outcomes at two points further into adulthood (ages 32 and 42 years) to identify the persistence of effects. Analyses of long-term consequences among teenage fathers are rare [20,22,23], and this work allows for an identification of effects for men and women

separately. With longitudinal data spanning more than 35 years, we are able to apply propensity score matching, an advanced analytic technique for estimating causal effects in observational data, to attempt to better isolate consequences from selection effects than many previous studies. Based on cumulative disadvantage theory, we hypothesize that teenage parenting perpetuates early disadvantages by adding responsibilities associated with child-rearing among those already with limited financial and social support. Specifically, we hypothesize that compared to nonteen parents from similar backgrounds, teenage parents achieve lower education and income and have poorer employment outcomes over the long-term. We expect consequences for both men and women over the life course but assume more consequences for women because of their greater role in child-rearing [24] and thus the greater disadvantage conveyed to them.

Methods

Sample

This analysis is based on the Woodlawn Study, a longitudinal study of African-American cohort from a socially disadvantaged community in Chicago. All first graders in the nine public and three parochial schools in the Woodlawn community were invited to participate and only 13 families declined [25]. In this study, data were collected at four time points. In first grade (1966–1967; age, 6 years), teachers and mothers (or mother surrogates) were interviewed ($N = 1,242$). When these children were teenagers (1975–1976; age, 16 years), their mothers or surrogates provided information ($N = 939$), as well as the teens themselves ($N = 705$). Interview data were collected when participants were aged 32 years (1992–1993, $N = 952$) and 42 years (2002–2003, $N = 833$). The current analysis involves 1,050 individuals, which includes those who have at least one adult interview and complete data on teen parenting. Of the 1,050 individuals included in this analysis, 731 completed both adult assessments, 218 only completed the young adulthood interview, and 101 only completed the midlife interview.

Further details of the Woodlawn Study population are described elsewhere [25]. Data collection and analyses were approved by the Committee on Human Research at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The University of Maryland Institutional Review Board also approved these analyses. Complete disclosure of the study has been made to participants, and data have been kept confidential.

Measures

Teenage parent. During the young adult (age, 32 years) and midlife interviews (age, 42 years), participants were asked their age at the birth of their first child. Anyone reporting an age <20 years was coded as being a teen parent.

Educational outcomes. At ages 32 and 42 years, participants reported their highest educational degree earned in the following categories: No high school diploma, general educational development certificate (GED), high school diploma, some college, and college degree.

Economic outcomes. Current unemployment at ages 32 and 42 years was based on questions on employment status in the previous week. Individuals employed full-time and part-time

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1079385>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1079385>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)