

Adolescents' Perspectives of Adolescent Marriages and Expectations About Marriages: A Turkey Sample

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent marriages is an important problem as children rights and it is also possible to encounter various health problem such as maternal and fatal results. It is aimed to find out adolescent who are risky group approaches and awareness about adolescent marriages. Research was conducted with 847 high school students. There is a substantial amount of students among adolescent group which can be a public health problem of their own age group. The number of students whose parents made adolescent marriage is high compatibly to literature. Female students are less informed of this violation of right based on gender inequality such as adolescent marriages, effects of these marriages and inadequacy of adolescent mother. Especially adolescents' awareness should be increased with formal and non-formal education. It is significant for education and consultanting in fulfilling children rights, ensuring social sexual equality, improving social position and roles of women. This study supports messages for adolescents and provides suggestions for future interventions.

Keywords: adolescent marriages, high school students, nursing

Introduction

Adolescent age means transition from childhood to adolescence. World Health Organisation defined this age between ages of 10-19 (Theodore, 2017; World Health Organization, 2005). While there are various definitions of adolescent age, this age is accepted as period of transition from childhood to maturity where biological, physical, social and psychological development and maturation occur (Gölbaşı, 2005; Harvey, Chadi, Soc, & Comm, 2016). According to the Convention on Children's Rights (20th October 1989), which Turkey also is a party of; According to the law applicable to children, except early majority, every person is considered as child until the age of eighteen (Lennartsson, 2012). According to the Law of Child

Protection (3rd July 2005), a child is a person who didn't turn eighteen yet even if he/she has reached majority early. In order for individual to be able to think including abstract thoughts, make decisions and to live by taking responsibility, certain level of spiritual and mental maturity is required which is physiologically equal to a period that continues until the age of eighteen (McFarlane, Nava, Gilroy, & Maddoux, 2016; Özcebe & Küçük, 2013). Depending on early marriages which are defined as marriages under the age of eighteen; certain negative outcomes might occur such as a low level of education due to dropping out of school, adolescent pregnancy, increasing baby mortality, morbidity and poverty. These negative results will potentially affect not only individuals but also their children and society in general (Beattie et al., 2015; Boran, Gökçay, Devcioğlu, & Eren, 2013; Neal, Stone, & Ingham, 2016). According to UNICEF 2014 data, more than 700 million women made a child marriage and 1/3 of marriages (roughly 250 million) happened before the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2014).

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According to WHO 2008 data, 16 million births were given by mothers between ages of 15-19 and this number of birth constitutes 11% of total births worldwide. Approximately 95% of these births occurred in less developed and developed countries (Handa et al., 2015; Maswikwa, Richter, Kaufman, & Nandi, 2015; Nasrullah, Zakar, & Zakar, 2014; Rahman, Hoque, Mostofa, & Makinoda, 2014). According to data of Turkish Institution of Statistics (TUIK, 2014) the number of girls who were given in marriage at the ages of 16-17 in 2013 is roughly 340 thousand. It is also seen that the age gap between 15,2% of kid brides and their spouses are 11 years and more (TUIK, 2014). Generality and types of early marriages show cultural and historical differences basing on society, it is still one of the significant social problems in patriarchal societies (Raj et al., 2014; Yüksel & Ergöçmen, 2012). Besides preventing use of human rights (Nour, 2009), the problem of early marriages also takes the basic rights of children away, particularly education, and also blocks their potential to actualise themselves among society (Aptel, 2016) It comes to be known that the potential of adolescent mothers' children of being unhealthy, suffer from abuse, having nutrition problems, suicide, committing criminal behaviours later on and having a lower level of economic and social life. (Callister, 2014; Gage, 2013; Le, Tran, Nguyen, & Fisher, 2014). Adolescent pregnancies might have maternal and fatal results, and it is also possible to encounter various health problems such as low birth weight, pre-term labour, death, cephalopelvic disproportion and maternal death (Chen et al., 2010; Keskin et al., 2014; Vienne, Creveuil, & Dreyfus, 2009). Besides, early marriages contribute in already unequal standing of women in society and create obstructions in utilising opportunities of education, health and working (Özcebe & Küçük, 2013). Marriages in early age confront us as a significant obstacle in situations such as decreasing poverty which is among one of the most significant targets in development of society, extending education, ensuring equality among genders, protecting children's life and improving health (Boran et al., 2013). This research is conducted in an attempt to determine

opinions and thoughts of adolescents' who are at risky age for adolescent marriages.

Material and Method

This research is a cross sectional survey research which is planned in order to determine p and thoughts of high school students, who are among adolescent group on adolescent marriages. So as to conduct research, along with ethical permission written and verbal received from Ankara Ministry of Education and High School Headmasters. Three high schools which are in Ankara city centre between dates of September 1st 2015 – January 14th 2014 generate population of research. The three high schools name coded as A High School (It is the high school that accepts students with a higher score of TEOG which is the entrance test of secondary education) B High School and C High School (These have similar level of academic success.) The research is conducted with 847 students whose grades change from 1st grade to senior grade. The questionnaire form used in data acquisition is consisted of 2 sections.

Socio demographic features of Student are 10 questions in the first section of questionnaire aimed at learning student's grade, educational status of parents, occupations of parents, family type, income status of family and the dwelling unit student lived the longest. Opinions and thoughts on adolescent marriages are 23 questions in total in second section of questionnaire aimed at questioning whether there is an adolescent marriage in student's family, relatives or circle of friends, condition of presence of a health problem in individuals who made adolescent marriage, opinions of students on effect of adolescent marriages on health and their thoughts regarding what is the correct age to be a parent. The data were analyzed with the percentile, mean and standard deviation, independent sample t-test, one-way Anova analysis and Post Hoc Tukey HSD. $P < 0.05$ level was considered to be significant. Written approval was obtained from Ankara National Education Directorate; the students to participate in the research were explained about the aim of the research, the expected benefits and about the research and the volunteering of the students are based.

Results

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Features of Students

High School	n	%
A High School	532	62,8
B High School	206	24,3
C High School	109	12,9
Gender		
Male	441	52,1
Female	406	47,9
Educational Status of Father		
University	451	53,2
High School	286	33,8
Secondary School	62	7,3
Primary School	48	5,7
Occupation of Father		
Self-Employed	397	46,9
Labourer	154	18,2
Civil Officer	135	15,9
Unemployed	39	4,6
Educational Status of Mother		
High School	325	38,4
University	293	34,6
Primary School	122	14,4
Secondary School	107	12,6
Occupation of Mother		
Unemployed	518	61,2
Civil Officer	192	22,7
Self-Employed	32	3,8
Labourer	21	2,4
Other	84	9,9
Family Type		
Elementary Family	774	91,4
Fragmented Family	38	4,5
Large Family	35	4,1
Condition of Monthly Regular Income		
Regular Income	819	96,7
No regular income	28	3,3
Income Status of Family		
Medium	508	60,0
Good	329	38,8
Bad	10	1,2
Dwelling Unit Longest Lived		
City Centre	737	87,0
District Centre	105	12,4
Village	5	0,6

In the study 62,8% of participant students are studying in A High School, 24,3% of them studies in B High School and 35,7% of them are in 9th Grade, 34,0% are in 11th grade. 52,1% of students are male. More than half of their fathers (53,2%) graduated from university and 34,6% of their mothers are graduates of university. 46,9% of their fathers have a profession and 61,2% of their mothers are housewives. 91,4% of their families are elementary family. 96,7% of families have regular income; 60% of students state their income status as “medium”. 87% answered “longest-lived dwelling place” as city centre and 12,4% answered as district centre (Table 1). 73,7% of students state they are informed of adolescent marriages. It is determined that resource of information on adolescent marriages are 22,7% internet, 17,9% classes and 17,2% television with a similar rate. 20,8% of students have adolescent marriage in their family and 50,6% of them have in their relatives. Answers to the question of “What do you think are possible problems in baby of adolescent mother?” are; 29,1% miscarriage, 25,1% preterm delivery, 2,0% low birth weight (Table 2). The answers to question “What do you think is the correct age to be a mother?” ranges from 13-35 and its arithmetical average is seen to be 25,8±2,8; and arithmetical average of answers about being a father is found 27,2±3,2 (Table 2). The situation of being informed of adolescent marriage changes depending on schools; while the rate of being informed in A High School is 79,1%, it is 64,6% in B High School and 64,2% in C High School with a close range. It is observed there is a significant relation between students’ high schools and being informed of adolescent marriages (<0.05).

Table 2: Opinions and Thoughts of Students on Adolescent Marriages

	n	%
Have any family members who married in adolescent		
No	671	79,2
Yes	176	20,8
Have any relatives who married in adolescent		
Yes	429	50,6
No	418	49,4
Informed of adolescent marriages		
Yes	624	73,7
No	223	26,3
Sources of information on adolescent marriages		
Internet	646	22,7
Family	575	20,2
Classes	509	17,9
Television	489	17,2
Book/Magazine	356	12,5
Friend/Neighbour	268	9,5
Possible problems in baby of adolescent mothers		
Miscarriage	567	29,1
Preterm Delivery	489	25,1
Low Birth Weight	429	22,0
Caesarean Birth	269	13,8
Other	98	5,1
No problem occurs in baby	95	4,9

There is not a statistically significant difference between the condition of finding adolescent marriages in appropriate and the high schools students are studying in. 92,9% of A High School students and

80,6% of B High School students think adolescent marriages might have effect on mental health and there is a statistically significant relation between high schools and answers to this question (<0.05).53,4% of

B High School students and 50,5% of C High School students think an adolescent mother will be inadequate in baby care; it is confirmed that 13,8% of C High School Students are indecisive about whether an adolescent mother will be inadequate in baby care and that the situation of finding a mother adequate in baby care depends on high schools (<0.05). According to Table 3; 76,5% of male students and 70,2% of female students state they are informed of adolescent

marriages; it is confirmed that condition of being informed of adolescent marriages change depending of gender of students (<0.05). While 72,3% of High School B students state they consider family as the cause of adolescent marriages; 51,4% of High School C students say that they think the individual's will is efficient; it is confirmed that answers depend on the high schools where students study (<0.05).

Table 3: Comparison of Opinions on Adolescent Marriage among High Schools

	School A		School B		School C	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Informed of adolescent marriages (p=0,000)						
Yes	421	79,1	133	64,6	70	64,2
No	111	20,9	73	35,4	39	35,8
Find adolescent marriages inconvenient (p=0,012)						
Yes	367	69,0	158	76,7	88	80,7
No	165	31,0	48	23,3	21	19,3
Adolescent marriages have positive effects (p=0,022)						
No	460	86,5	167	81,1	84	77,1
Yes	72	13,5	39	18,9	25	22,9
Adolescent marriages might have effects on physical health (p=0,318)						
Yes	406	76,3	149	72,3	77	70,6
No	126	23,7	57	27,7	32	29,4
Adolescent marriages might have effects on mental health (p=0,000)						
Yes	494	92,9	166	80,6	87	79,8
No	38	7,1	40	19,4	22	20,2
Adolescent mothers have more problems in pregnancy (p=0,0049)						
Yes	453	85,2	164	79,6	84	77,1
No	79	14,8	42	20,4	25	22,9
Adequate an adolescent mother in terms of care of baby (p=0,003)						
Inadequate	260	48,9	110	53,4	55	50,5
Slightly adequate	191	35,9	52	25,2	32	29,4
Indecisive	45	8,5	15	7,3	15	13,8
Adequate	28	5,3	17	8,3	4	3,7
Very adequate	8	1,5	12	5,8	3	2,8
Father can fulfil his role at a sufficient level in adolescent marriages (p=0,003)						
No	487	91,5	171	83,0	94	86,2
Yes	45	8,5	35	17,0	15	13,8
The cause of adolescent marriages (p=0,000)						
Individual's will	101	19,0	44	21,4	56	51,4
Family	369	69,4	149	72,3	46	42,2
Circle of friends	62	11,7	13	6,3	7	6,4
Family planning methods are efficiently used in adolescent marriages (p=0,000)						
No	487	91,5	167	81,1	85	78,0

Yes	45	8,5	39	18,9	24	22,0
Adolescent individuals are informed of venereal diseases (p=0,018)						
No	396	74,4	133	64,6	73	67,0
Yes	136	25,6	73	35,4	36	33,0
Adolescent marriages affect the number of birth (p=0,000)						
Yes	442	83,1	137	66,5	77	70,6
No	90	16,9	69	33,5	32	29,4
Number of birth, does it increase or decrease (p=0,030)						
Increases	432	81,2	149	72,3	85	78,0
Decreases	100	18,8	57	27,7	24	22,0

*Fisher's Exact Test is applied.

83,1% of High School A students say adolescent marriages affect number of birth and 81,2% of them think it increases number of birth; 66,5% of B High School students state adolescent marriages affect number of birth and 72,3% of them think this effects act in direction of increasing number of births.

Table 4: Comparison of Students' Genders and Their Opinions on Adolescent Marriage

	Female		Male	
	%	n	%	n
Informed of adolescent marriages (p=0,029)				
Yes	285	70,2	339	76,9
No	121	29,8	102	23,1
Find adolescent marriages inappropriate (p=0,318)				
Yes	287	70,7	326	73,9
No	119	29,3	115	26,1
Adolescent marriages have positive effects (p=0,400)				
Yes	70	17,2	66	15,0
No	336	82,8	375	85,0
Adolescent marriages might have effects on physical health (p=0,033)				
Yes	289	71,2	343	77,8
No	117	28,8	98	22,2
Adolescent marriages might have effects on mental health (p=0,018)				
Yes	347	85,5	400	90,7
No	59	14,5	41	9,3
Adolescent mothers have more problems in their pregnancies (p=0,000)				
Yes	314	77,3	387	87,8
No	92	22,7	54	12,2
Adolescent mother's adequate in terms of baby care (p=0,006)				
Inadequate	179	44,1	246	55,8
Slightly adequate	142	35,0	133	30,2
Adequate	27	6,7	22	5,0
Very adequate	16	3,9	7	1,6
Indecisive	42	10,3	33	7,5
Father fulfil his role at a sufficient level in adolescent marriages (p=0,004)				
Yes	59	14,5	36	8,2
No	347	85,5	405	91,8
Cause of adolescent marriages (p=0,170)				
Family				
Individual's will	258	63,5	306	69,4
Circle of friends	103	25,4	98	22,2
Family planning methods efficiently used in adolescent marriages (p=0,039)				
Yes	62	15,3	46	10,4

No	344	84,7	395	89,6
Adolescent individuals are informed of venereal diseases (p=0,005)				
Yes	136	33,5	109	24,7
No	270	66,5	332	75,3
Adolescent marriages affect number of birth (p=0,002)				
Yes	295	72,7	361	81,9
No	111	27,3	80	18,1
Number of birth, does it increase or decrease (p=0,314)				
Increase	313	77,1	353	80,0
Decrease	93	22,9	88	20,0

*Fisher's Exact Test is applied

77,8% of male students express adolescent marriages might have effects on physical health and 90,7% of male students say adolescent marriages might have effects on mental health; it is observed that there is a statistically significant relation between students' gender and their opinions pertaining to adolescent marriages' possible physical and mental effects (<0.05). 87,7% of male students and 77,3% of male students state adolescent mothers might have more problems in their pregnancy and answers change basing on gender of students (<0.05). 55,8% of male students and 44,1% female students think an adolescent mother might be inadequate in baby care; it is found that 10,3% of female students are indecisive and that there is a statistically significant relations between students' gender and condition of finding an adolescent mother adequate in baby care (<0.05). 91,8% of male students and 85 % female students replied in the negative to the question "Do you think father can fulfil his role at a sufficient level in adolescent marriages?"; it is revealed that students' opinions change depending on their genders (<0.05). 75,3% of male students, 66,5% of female students do not think adolescent individuals are informed of venereal diseases and it is seen that answers vary depending on genders (<0.05). While 81,9% of male students opined adolescent marriages affect number of birth, it is confirmed that 72,7% of female students agree on this opinion and that there is a relation (<0.05) between gender of students and the situation of agreeing on the thought that adolescent marriages affect number of birth (Table 4). While 71,2% of student who state they are informed of adolescent marriages think families are the cause of adolescent marriages, it is observed that 53,8% of students, who think they are not informed of, indicated family and 35,0% of these students answered as individual and that answers differ (<0.05) depending on situation of being informed of adolescent marriages (Table 4).

Discussion

The rate of those who married in adolescent age is 20,8% in our study. In comparison to Turkey Population and Health Research (TNSA) 2013 data; it is observed that 16% of adolescents between 15-19 ages in our country are married. The fact that our results are higher than TNSA data can point out existence of unregistered adolescent marriages. In study of Melekoğlu and others (2013) it is confirmed that 52,5% of adolescent women do not have an legal marriage (Melekoğlu et al., 2013). That is known education status is related with adolescent marriages (Beattie et al., 2015; Kim, Longhofer, Boyle, & Brehm, 2013). In our study, a statistical difference is found between mothers-fathers educational status who has married in adolescent age. The number of adolescent marriages is high in those with low level of education. In this case, it will be required to emphasise the significance of education once more (Magadi & Agwanda, 2009). In our study, 223 (26,3%) out of 847 students think they are not informed of adolescent marriages. 121 of them are female and 102 are male. The requirement for the study is of relatable to the need of adolescent group for knowledge and points out the significance of the subject. The situation of being informed of adolescent marriage changes depending on schools; High School A students think they are more informed in comparison to other high school. Percentage of High School A students in stating that adolescent marriage might have effect on mental health, affects number of birth and that an efficient family planning method is not used is more than percentage of other students'; and differences among high schools are statistically significant. High School A is where students who made a better score in transition to secondary education test (TEOG) are placed in. Our study results show that answers, which are given by high schools where students are placed in basing on their success points, are statistically significant. The truth that education is efficient on being informed of

and raising awareness towards adolescent marriages can be related to difference of knowledge level among high schools (Neal et al., 2016). Basing on students' genders, the answers to questions of being informed of adolescent marriages, effects adolescent marriages on physical and mental health, adolescent mothers' having more problems in their pregnancy, adolescent mother's being inadequate in baby care, father's not being able to fulfil his role at a sufficient level in adolescent marriages, adolescent marriages' effect on number of birth are more in male students; and the difference in between is statistically significant. According to literature, adolescent mothers present risky behaviour in terms of baby's health and display behaviours of smoking in pregnancy and not breastfeeding baby more (Keskinoglu et al., 2007). It is stated that adolescent mothers feel lonely and helpless between this world and the world to come and they need counselling both for themselves and new-born care (J., 2010; Martin, Specter, Martin, & Martin, 2003). As it is known, girls are affected by adolescent marriages the most. No matter how much violation of right is in question for both genders, girls suffer more because they are given to marriage much earlier than boys. According to TUIK 2014 data, while the number of married boys between ages of 16-17 is 1670, the number of girls is 34629. However, males in our study are more informed of adolescent marriage, its effects and damages and support the idea that father cannot fulfil his roles; female students defended the idea of adolescent mother's inadequacy in baby care less than male students. Literature information shows that adolescent mothers take the responsibility of their babies in the period of first 2 months later than mature mothers and they experience more problems in accessing health services (Letourneau, Stewart, & Barnfather, 2004). Cultural and social norms such as mothership role imposed on girls by social gender, showing marriage attractive are thought to be possible cause of this difference between genders. In this line, it is obvious that female students should be more conscious in this respect (Sweetman & Oxfam, 2003). While majority of students who state they are informed of adolescent marriages think families are cause of adolescent marriages (71,2%), 53,8% of student. 53,8 of students thinking they are not informed about adolescent marriage. It is observed that answers change depending on situation of being informed of adolescent marriages. As it is known, adolescent marriages are affected by many elements such as social pressure, family's will, honour and poverty and they are generally resulted from causes other than girls. The fact that a significant rate of student thinks marriage is choice of adolescent gives rise to the thought to question levels of

knowledge and awareness on this subject (Silliman & Schumm, 2004). In our study, students mainly think that family planning methods cannot be used efficiently in adolescent marriages. Study results comply with literature and it is known that girls married in early age suffer from social pressure and do not use family planning methods so as to prove their fertility (Turkish Republic, 2012). 28,9% of students think adolescent individuals are informed of venereal diseases. According to research carried out by the Ministry of Health and TNSA collectively, 34,6% of girls and 21% of boys between 15-19 ages have not heard of sexually transmitted infections (CYBE). Unfamiliarity to these diseases is more in girls. Unsafe sexual behaviours, inadequate knowledge regarding protection from pregnancy result in uncontrolled pregnancy and birth in adolescent marriages and negative results of this situation appear (Anahit, 2012; Nour, 2009; Şolt A., 2015; WHO, 2014). The fact that Turkey has a traditional structure of education and the context does not involve information on sexuality still continues to exist as a significant problem (Şolt A., 2015). In our study, a considerable amount of student (22,5%) think adolescent marriages do not affect number of birth. However, fertility and miscarriage in early age are observed in adolescent marriages compared to other marriages and the number of birth increases accordingly (Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2007).

Conclusion and Suggestions

In our study, there is a substantial amount of students among adolescent group who doesn't inform of adolescent marriages which is a public health problem of their own age group. The number of students whose parents made adolescent marriage is high compatibly to literature. In comparison to male students, female students are less informed of this violation of right based on gender inequality such as adolescent marriages, effects of these marriages and inadequacy of adolescent mother; thus, their requirement of education is important (Suleiman, Johnson, Shirtcliff, & Galvan, 2015). Students of High School A who are on higher rank in terms of high school entrance point are more informed of adolescent marriages compared to students of other high schools. In accordance to our results we can say awareness on adolescent marriages are rising which are a multi-dimensional subject; among girls, society, family, youth. Especially the adolescents' awareness should be increased in formal and non-formal education and social media should be used as well since they are mainly used for access to information by youngsters. It is suggested to provide sexual health and reproductive health information and

services, raising awareness on disadvantages of early marriages and support these works with various laws and policies. It is significant for nurses to be educative and consultant in fulfilling contemporary roles such as defender of women's rights, ensuring social sexual equality, improving social position and roles of women. Significant responsibilities fall to them especially in preventing adolescent marriages and preventing pregnancies if marriage already happened. Girls who are given in marriage in early age cannot benefit from their spouses' health insurance since they do not made legal marriage. It is suggested to formal education in terms of sexual health/reproductive health information, increase to knowledge of adolescents about sexual life, pregnancy and being a parent, prepare training programs aimed at adolescents and use to mass communication as efficiently.

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