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PSYCHOSOCIAL CONDITIONS AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR IN PREGNAT TEENAGERS: A CASE-CONTROL STUDY IN BRAZIL

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Aim: To compare the psychosocial profile and suicidal behavior of 110 pregnant teenagers (PT) with 110 non-pregnant teenagers (NPT).

Method: Subjects were matched by age and residential district. A structured interview and psychometric scales were used. Uni-and multivariate logistic regression were performed.

Results: Prevalence in the PT and the NPT groups were: attempted suicide (20.0% vs 6.3%); depression (26.3% vs 13.6%); anxiety (43.6% vs 28.0%). Univariate analysis revealed the following significant associations with pregnancy: relocation in the previous 3 years (odds ratio (OR) = 6); years of schooling \leq 7 (OR = 3.4); dropping out of school (OR = 5.2); death of a parent during childhood (OR = 2.9); use of alcohol/drugs in the family (OR = 2.5); previous attempted suicide (OR = 3.6); suicide by a relative (OR = 2.1); threats of physical/sexual abuse (OR = 3.5); depression (OR = 2.2); low level of social support (OR = 4.2), psychosocial difficulties (OR = 4.4); prior use of marijuana (OR = 4.8); weekly intake of alcohol over the previous 12 months (OR = 4.2). Multivariate analysis identified the following associations: relocation (OR = 6.4); prior use of tobacco (OR = 2.9); dropping out of school (OR = 2.3); suicide by a social acquaintance (OR = 2.5).

Conclusion: The PT case group exhibited a psychosocial profile whose characteristics clearly differentiate this group from the NPT control group. Preventive mental health care is needed to help pregnant teenagers because their behavioral pattern exposes them to high risk for suicide.